



UPGRADE SPECIALIST IN ANOTHER WORLD

BOOK 03

Endless Sea Of Clouds

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Upgrade Specialist in Another World

(异界之装备强化专家)

by

Endless Sea Of Clouds

(茫茫云海)

Synopsis

Just as a gamer found an overpowered skill book called ‘Item Upgrade’ in the hottest virtual reality role-playing game on Earth, something happened to the game’s system, causing his soul to leave his body and go to another dimension. Common sense dictates that he would be born anew then become the greatest overlord of this world by making use of his advanced knowledge. Not in this case! He was already dead. Only some fragments of his soul and that skill book managed to get into that dimension and merge with an ordinary common youngster called Bai Yunfei.

This was the enormous Tianhun continent, where humans could be said to have no limits. There was a group of humans here who could cultivate the power of their own souls then control their bodies, the natural elements and even other people’s souls with that power! These special beings were called — soul cultivators. Come witness how the several fragments of the dead inter-dimensional traveler’s soul and that skill book, which was not governed by the laws of this plane, were going to help Bai Yunfei become a legendary soul cultivator and craftsman!

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English Translation by Deceptioning @ [Wuxiaworld](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

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Chapter 201: Alarming Change!

Whilst Bai Yunfei was pondering what problem was about to arise, fire began to stir and billow from all four directions before several fireballs materialized around him.

But this time, they were stronger than before.

“No way, again?!”

Bai Yunfei lamented out loud before bringing his spear back out...

The waves of fire materialized into even more waves of attacks that gave Bai Yunfei no time to rest yet again. Steadfast, Bai Yunfei continued to defend himself from this ‘barrage’ of attacks with a moody expression.

Ten minutes later, the assault came to a stop.

Taking out several spirit-boosting accessories, Bai Yunfei wore them on his body with curled lips and bared teeth, “Fuck this shit! I know there’s going to be more!!”

As if obeying his call, another volley of fire-related strikes began to appear within a ten meter radius of him...

And so the third volley began....

Then the fourth....

Then the fifth....

If not for the spirit-boosting accessories to accelerate his regeneration of soulforce or the explosive effect of the Fire-tipped Spear and the effect of the Flameblade Bracer clearing out the place, Bai Yunfei would’ve dreaded thinking about what would happen to him.

He risked everything in his defense, and even though he had been caught in a dance of peril; not a single strike had hit him even once!

At last, the ninth volley....

“Boom!!”

Once again, the effect from the Fire-tipped Spear activated again, blowing away the fireballs coming at him from the front.

“Bang!”

Whirling around with the speed of lightning itself, a burst of fire exploded forth from his arm. Thanks to the three hundred soulpoints stockpiled in his ring, Bai Yunfei was able to summon a flame blade to strike out and vanquish yet another fire dart....

As the sparks of fire danced and flickered away, the space around them started to calm down.

Both hands of Bai Yunfei grasped at his spear as he tried his best to recover his soulforce. At the same time, he was desperately praying to himself, “Please...for the love of everything, how many more times will there be a repeat until you give up?! Agh....I won’t be able to take it anymore!

Who in the world can tell me, just when will this end?!”

.....

In the meanwhile, the doors to the ‘outside’ was just starting to open up.

The immediate vicinity around the gates was swamped with a wave of red light as it shone through the crevice. It was mysterious in its image; the elements around the door seemed to have stabilized with Kou Changkong standing just a few ten meters away from the doors along with the elders. Each one of them were silent as they looked on to the front of the gates.

Song Lin observed the crevice past the doors with narrowed eyebrows and an anxious look on his face. Then, movement from beyond the door caught his eye, prompting him to call out, “It’s junior Ye, he’s come out!”

Indeed. As a figure walked through the gates and into view, it was soon made clear that it was Ye Zhiqiu.

He didn't look different at all from when he first entered, and Ye Zhiqiu didn't have the aura of someone that made a breakthrough either. But still, the look on his face looked extremely excited either way.

“Master, headmaster, elder, your student has succeeded in forging a soulbound armament!”

His loud and happy voice resonated through the area, but he spoke still in a respectful voice to the elders there.

Nodding his head in satisfaction, Huangfu Nan laughed out loud, “Haha, very well! Very well indeed! It's no wonder you're a disciple of mine; you've done well for your master!”

It was a joyful laughter, but ironic. He had forgotten that since Ye Zhiqiu joined the inner school, he had not been taught anything....

Kou Changkong had a smile on his face as well, but he didn't bother to ask about what Ye Zhiqiu had acquired as his soulbound armament. Nodding towards him with a faint smile, he said, “Very well. A success is a success. Wait on by the side for now; Yunfei hasn't returned yet.”

“Yes!” Ye Zhiqiu replied respectfully before moving off to the side where Li Tiechui was. Even as he turned however, there was a look of concern on his face, “Yunfei already went in? I thought I was alone in there; but....if I came out after he went in, why didn't I see him in there?”

“Junior Ye, there's no need to think so hard about it. While you two went in at the same time, your destinations were completely different....” Li Tiechui answered Ye Zhiqiu's thoughts as if he knew what Zhiqiu was thinking about.

“Eh?” Startled, Ye Zhiqiu's mind raced furiously to connect the

dots. Hushed, he spoke to his senior, “Then this must be...a spatial skill?!”

All Li Tiechui did to respond was nod his head. But that nod was more than enough to leave Zhiqui thunderstruck. Asking no more about it, he turned back to look at the door. “So this is one of the rumored spatial skills! The Crafting School is far more unusual than I thought....”

Silence descended back down into the cave as everyone stared attentively at the gates to wait for Bai Yunfei to come walking out...

.....

Within the crimson space.

It was a mystery on whether or not Bai Yunfei’s prayers worked or not, but for the past several minutes, absolutely nothing had happened to him. This lack of response had left Bai Yunfei more afraid than relaxed, however.

Letting out a breath of air that had been stuck in his mouth for far too long, Bai Yunfei wiped away at the dried up sweat gathered on his forehead. Relieved, he said to himself, “Finally it’s all over! Anymore and I would’ve been roast—”

“Eh?” Right as Bai Yunfei was recovering his soulforce, something out of the corner of his eyes triggered a reaction from him.

Turning his head to look at the still crimson area; Bai Yunfei could just barely see a faint fluctuation start to occur in the middle of it. It wasn’t the same pattern as any of the fire-related attack so far....

“Crap!! It’s another problem to deal with!!” Bai Yunfei shouted in surprise.

At last did he realized something was off.

The elemental fire that constituted the crimson mist around him started to churn in on itself, but....

It was only in that one small area alone!

Upon closer observation, Bai Yunfei was able to see that the 'red mist' around him was clearly separating the outside zone from him. The red mist was made from elemental fire, but there was another power in play that wasn't combining with the elemental fire.

With several more seconds spent in observation, the look on Bai Yunfei's face grew progressively worse. At this current moment, all he could think about was when this energy would attack, or how it would come attack him!

This situation was only happening after Bai Yunfei had smashed apart all of those fireballs and fire darts after all!

Almost as if reacting to Bai Yunfei's 'discovery' of it, the source of this energy quickly started to billow over on itself like a giant vortex taking form!

"I knew it! I knew it wouldn't be this simple!!"

His heart skipped a beat, and Bai Yunfei wanted nothing more but to cry out at this injustice; but doing so would be pointless. Snarling, he made use of his still-remaining portion of soulforce and prepared to leap out from the range of this 'vortex'.

"Wha?!" Just a second after agreeing on a plan, Bai Yunfei's face revealed a stunned expression. Not even seconds passed before that before his face became dreadfully white and his eyes reflected terror never before seen!

He....he couldn't move!!

He was still capable of clear thought and sensing that all of his limbs were still existing, but the fact remained that he couldn't move from his spot! Even as he tried as hard as he could to send a signal from his brain to lift his leg up, his entire body refused to

budge and remained like a pole in the ground!

“What’s going on? What the hell is going on?!” Bai Yunfei roared to himself as he tried his best to regain control of his body. Despite his efforts, it was all futile. He had become a statue where even a finger wasn’t capable of being moved!

From there, all Bai Yunfei could do was stare in terror as his body was suddenly brought rising up into the air!

Lifted up to a height of ten meters into the air, all Bai Yunfei could do was hold onto his Fire-tipped Spear. Despite not being able to move, his arms were forced into dropping to his side so that his body was perfectly aligned in a vertical line in the air.

With eyes still looking at the swirling red vortex of energy, Bai Yunfei could see the vortex was spinning faster and faster while becoming smaller and more condensed. And then in the end, it became a two meter long crimson tornado that now situated Bai Yunfei at the center of it.

“Move! Move!! Moveeee!!!” Bai Yunfei’s mind screamed; his teeth were gritted as hard as they could, and both of his eyes looked as if they were about to cry tears of blood. All of the soulforce still left in his body was desperately circulating through it so that he’d somehow find a way to break through his constraints.

In this current moment of time, Bai Yunfei had completely forgotten about the fact that he was in the mysterious cave of the Crafting School and that he was currently being given the ‘chance’ all disciples were given.

This predicament where Bai Yunfei was experiencing a loss of bodily control had left his mind completely devoid of everything else but fear.

Thinking about anything else was useless.

By now, the tornado that encapsulated Bai Yunfei had shrunk even more so that the tornado looked as if it was cut away from its

main body to swirl around Bai Yunfei. This time, the pointed spout from where the tornado was originating from was now on top of Bai Yunfei's heart!

Before Bai Yunfei could even react, this condensed form of elemental fire drilled straight into his chest!

“Aaaahhhh!!!”

A blood-curling scream erupted from Bai Yunfei's mouth as he felt every single inch of his body 'absorb' the elemental fire into it!

At the same time, the rest of the vortex that was beneath his body had reverted back to a previous stage of the vortex to assimilate over his right hand.

The abnormally large amount of elemental fire then proceeded to drill into the Fire-tipped Spear still clenched tightly in his right hand!

There was a decent amount of energy that overflowed and spilled away from the spear and then into the Flameblade Bracer on his right arm as well!

Chapter 202: A Double Upgrade of the Fire-tipped Spear

Pain.

A pain that tore at the heart and shredded the flesh.

His entire body was washed into a pain that burned like a sea of flames. Such was the pain that his heart felt like it was bathed into a pool of lava.

He could feel like his entire body was being burned alive, and this 'sensation' continued to persist with time after time.

By the time it was finished, half an hour had passed. Bai Yunfei's entire person was covered by the same crimson light, and his body was motionless. The last sound that came from him was the continual scream that started half an hour ago and ended ten minutes ago when his throat went hoarse.

After having all that elemental fire forcefully pressed into his body, Bai Yunfei's consciousness was hovering at a halfway point.

But just barely, he could feel another feeling that wasn't there before.

His body felt as if the internal temperature had been raised to their limits after having been saturated by the elemental fire in him. But even after the elemental fire had gathered in his body, he felt his entire body start to ease up in temperature after a while!

The endless amount of pain he was feeling was abating by a small amount, but it left Bai Yunfei with such comfort that he nearly groaned aloud. The raging torrent of heat inside him trickled away to become a small flow after having visited every single inch of his bones, veins, and acupoints...

Baptized by the elemental fire, Bai Yunfei's body was now returning back to its normal state. Even the pain that was so

prominent before was starting to become more of a comfortable feeling rather than a painful one.

All of the elemental fire that had arrived at the ‘essence aperture’ where the essence fireseed was located, the elemental fire began to compress more and more before coming into contact with it. Like ice and snow, the two combined together only to leave behind a barely seeable line of red that twisted and turned all around the essence fireseed. And amongst it all--a condensed form of elemental fire essence!

More and more, Bai Yunfei felt more comfortable with this feeling to the point of growing hazy in thought. This feeling had been similar to as if his entire soul was being bathed and refined....

In his dazed stupor, a sudden notification flashed in his mind, shocking Bai Yunfei back to awareness.

But to only be surprised at what greeted him.

Upgrade Successful

“.....”

For a minute or so, Bai Yunfei didn’t know what else to do but to stare. His eyes were wide open from shock, but joy could be seen in them as well.

“I know this feeling! It’s....it’s just like that one time....It’s exactly like that one time!!”

He wasn’t wrong. This feeling he had now was exactly the same from when he first condensed his essence fireseed!

The power that had robbed Bai Yunfei of his mobility was gone as well, leaving Bai Yunfei to drop back down to the ground. Twisting over, Bai Yunfei managed to land back on his feet with a ‘thud’. Standing back up, Bai Yunfei ignored the change to his essence fireseed first to look impatiently at the Fire-tipped Spear in his hand with excitement.

Equipment Grade: High Inheritance

Upgrade Level: +12

Attack: 1380

Additional Attack: 1300

+10 Additional Effect: When stabbing, there is a 20% chance to cause an explosion

+12 Additional Effect: Create two Doppelgangers with strength equivalent to 50% of the caster's total strength at the time of casting for a duration of 3 seconds. Cooldown of 1 hour.

Upgrade Requirement: 96 Soulpoints

It worked!!

Bai Yunfei’s eyes stared hard at the Fire-tipped Spear while the rest of his body shook furiously. Joy lit up his eyes a few moments afterwards.

Even after all that inhumane amount of pain he was subjected to; a result like this?

Worth it!

It was so absolutely worth it!!

The pain had been so bad that Bai Yunfei had felt like he was going to die, but a return like this was simply far too generous!

Quirking his eyebrows, Bai Yunfei realized with a start that something else had changed as well. Looking to his Flameblade Bracer on his left arm, Bai Yunfei waited for the notification screen to pop up.

Equipment Grade: Low Inheritance

Upgrade Requirement: +12

Defense: 753

Additional Defense: 706

+10 Additional Effect: When blocking, there is a 9% chance of absorbing and converting the attack power into personal attack power, releasing it with your next attack. It can be held for 3 seconds. The amount of converted attack power cannot exceed the defensive strength of this item.

+12 Additional Effect: By using soulpoints, a flaming winged dagger can be summoned. Soulpoints will be consumed for as long as it is active, and the strength of the dagger will be determined by the amount of soulpoints fed to it.

Upgrade Requirement: 91 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei was crestfallen at this change; how could there just be an measly increase of two hundred defense?

But then in the next second, Bai Yunfei began to curse at himself in disdain. His was becoming greedy again.

Sucking in a deep breath, Bai Yunfei looked all around himself. The area was back to normal to when he first entered the cave with elemental fire all around the area. It was weaker in magnitude since he had absorbed a decent amount of it. With an even closer inspection, Bai Yunfei was able to confirm there wouldn't be any other unforeseen developments, allowing him to relax a bit and sit down on the ground.

While he was filled with power in his body, his head was tormented by a ceaseless amount of fatigue. It was a blight of the spirit and soul.

Not bothering to study the effects of the newly-improved Fire-tipped Spear, Bai Yunfei moved into a lotus position with the spear placed on top of his thighs. Closing his eyes, he began to concentrate.

Jubilantly, the elemental fire in his body continued to move along with his soulforce. Compared to before, the amount of elemental fire was far more abundant! Even the 'essence aperture'

where his heart was, the essence fireseed there was bigger than what it was before!

Bai Yunfei opened both eyes to reveal a light reminiscent to a dancing flame in there. It was a bright light that filled the entirety of his eye, but it disappeared as quickly as it came so that his eyes went back to normal. Only a smile was left on his face now.

“Just a little more....I haven’t broken through, but there’s just one more wall to climb!” Bai Yunfei sighed with clenched fists.

He was a late-stage Soul Sprite when he came to the Crafting School. The strangeness that happened to him today hadn’t been enough to elevate his strength to a new level, but it gave him a new appreciation. A new level of comprehension of the elemental fire. He couldn’t describe this appreciation in words, but it was born from the intense pain he experienced.

After giving a routine inspection of his body, Bai Yunfei returned his gaze to the Fire-tipped Spear in his hand. Touching the weapon, Bai Yunfei had the distinct feeling that this weapon was an extension of his own body. He had this feeling once before, but it was an extremely faint feeling in comparison to today.

Thinking back to what just happened to him in that mysterious moment, Bai Yunfei’s mind began to race furiously. “Now I get it. This was the ‘chance’ the headmaster was talking about! I can’t even bother to try and guess what this place really is, and neither should I be able to even begin to understand this place, but there’s one obvious thing about this place. This mysterious place is where people can go to condense their essence fireseed! In other words, this place allows for a person to undergo a situation similar to when a person becomes a Soul Sprite to condense their essence fireseed for a second time essentially!

“That first wave must’ve been the test to see if my strength was up to par and if I could withstand their strongest blow. It’s probably also a way to see just how much I can absorb....I overdid

it then! Because of the Upgrade Technique, the ‘test’ got even stronger than it should be and nearly pumped me too full of elemental fire....”

Bai Yunfei shook his head sadly.

“Even though the pain was a lot stronger than it should be, I got an equal amount of benefits from it too. Not only did the Fire-tipped Spear get a boost in tier, it went up in grade as well!

“If it were anyone else, their soul armament would’ve most likely increased by a small amount or gain some extra attack. But for me with the Upgrade Technique....it was forcibly upgraded! This is the second time already! I wonder when I’ll finally be able to figure out the strangeness behind this....or when I’ll be able to get the chance to enter this state again....

“The Flameblade Bracer gained another two hundred points in attack as well, but the other equipment I have didn’t change at all. Does this mean....everything depends on how much I ‘used’ an item or not?” Bai Yunfei thought.

Another thought flashed through his mind, “Is this why the headmaster didn’t tell me anything about it? Was he afraid it’d influence my choice? What if I was using some sort of ordinary weapon then?!”

Thinking about the problem for a little longer, Bai Yunfei revealed a small smile on his face after a while. “Impossible...” He shook his head, “In a situation like that, any person would definitely use their strongest soul armament. With all those soul armaments given to us from that cave, only I’d have the choice of ‘having a choice’.”

Ye Zhiqiu had already chosen that favored sword of his to use, and even if one were to use an ordinary weapon, the chances of it surviving in such an area was surely not high.

“If I used the Ardent Sun Gloves to defend myself, it would’ve

most likely become a soulbound armament. But using the Fire-tipped Spear isn't that bad either...A win and a loss...as long the gains outweigh the cons, it's worth it!

“Nothing else should happen by now, so....should I go back? I don't even know just how long I've been here....” Bai Yunfei thought as he stored his spear away and prepared to leave.

At some point when he was standing up, a sudden thought ran through his head. Sitting back down, his eyes glowed brightly with the light of an idea in them.

“This is a hard chance to come by. Since I'm here, I shouldn't waste it....It's a little extreme, but this should save me some time if I can gain the favor of the headmaster. I might as well try it out!”

With a plan in mind, Bai Yunfei's smile grew even wider as he waved his hand to retrieve the Ardent Sun Gloves.

“Upgrade!”

Chapter 203: Soul Compatibility

Within the cave, there was nothing noticeable being changed from the other side of the gates. Kou Changkong and the other elders were left with nothing but confusion as they waited for Bai Yunfei.

“Three hours have passed already, why has Bai Yunfei not returned yet? Has something happened to him inside?” Huangfu Nan couldn’t help but ask as he stared at the gate.

“There shouldn’t have. You should know as well that there is no real danger in that space....” Kou Changkong shook his head to reject Huangfu Nan’s response. Though, he too was curious as well, “But still, it has been far too long. There is only a ‘test’ and ‘refining’ period in there, nothing more. There shouldn’t be anything else to be done. Perhaps he has some reason for staying in there?”

“It can’t be for greed. Does he think he could stay in there for another chance to repeat this ‘chance’?” Huangfu Nan asked.

Kou Changkong shook his head, “We’ll see. If he doesn’t come out in half an hour, I’ll shut the doors and forcibly recall him.”

.....

Ten minutes later.

From beyond the gates, the sounds of footsteps could be heard. In the next few seconds, the calm-faced Bai Yunfei could be seen stepping on through.

What everyone saw shocked them all. Bai Yunfei had made a drastic change in attire--he had a bracer on both arms, the right hand wore the Ardent Sun Gloves, and even the Fire-tipped Spear was clenched tightly in his hand rather than being stored away in his space ring.

Walking up to Kou Changkong, Bai Yunfei bowed respectfully to

him. “Master, your student has done you well and forged my own soulbound armament!”

Despite his curiosity on the reason why for Bai Yunfei’s change in attire, Kou Changkong decided not to question it. Instead, he nodded his head. “Yes, very well. My eye wasn’t wrong to see that you weren’t too far away from Zhiqu in talent....”

Beckoning to Ye Zhiqu, he then spoke, “Zhiqu, come forward.”

Ye Zhiqu took a position next to Bai Yunfei’s side with a nod and a bow of the head to him.

“Say what you experienced in the cave and what you gained from it.”

“Yes!” Ye Zhiqu spoke in affirmation. Shaking his right hand, the azure colored blade he picked earlier appeared in it. An azure light flowed from the blade with a faint amount of elemental wind accompanying it. “Your disciple fought off six waves before forging my own soulbound armament. It has increased to a mid-heaven tier!”

With a push of his soulforce into the blade, the sword began to hum and vibrate with a faint ringing sound. The azure light around it intensified in intensity as it began to show off the might of a mid-heaven tier sword.

One by one, the elders there had a look of surprise on their face. It was Huangfu Nan however who laughed first, “Haha! Very good! Even Fei Nian was only able to last five rounds...but you lasted six, very good!”

Kou Changkong nodded his head in satisfaction as well before turning his attention to Bai Yunfei, “Yunfei, what about you?”

He hesitated to respond for a second before finally deciding to speak up out loud, “Your disciple underwent nine waves and turned two soul armaments into soulbound armaments. The two soul armaments given to me upon entry to the Crafting School

weren't reforged, but they increased in strength as well!"

Without hesitation, Bai Yunfei pressed his soulforce into his equipment so that the two bracers, the Ardent Sun Gloves, and the Fire-tipped Spear appeared in its full glory to represent itself to the people in front of him.

"This...."

Once again, everyone was stunned, even the normally quiet first elder. In his stunned daze, his eyes looked to Bai Yunfei with shock.

"Low-heaven tier!" Kou Changkong gasped at the Fire-tipped spear in Bai Yunfei's hand before his eyes flickered over to the Flameblade Bracer, "High-earth tier....two soulbound armaments!"

The first elder glanced at the Ardent Sun Gloves and the Returner Bracer observantly, "That bracer was a mid-earth tier one, and that glove was a low-heaven tier item that you recently got, but....they're now high-earth tier and mid-heaven tier!"

Aghast, Huangfu Nan could only voice his questions aloud to Bai Yunfei, "How is this possible?"

Whilst the three elders were staring at Bai Yunfei in shock, Song Lin and Li Tiechui were also staring at Bai Yunfei with a strange look. Neither of the two could hardly believe their eyes at what they were seeing, but the four soul armaments in front of them were undeniable proof in saying what they saw was true...

.....

This was the decision Bai Yunfei made!

He worried in the past that he'd not be able to explain the mystery behind the Flameblade Bracer and the Fire-tipped Spear after making it to the Crafting School. The students wouldn't be able to notice, but should an elder take note of him using it, there'd be no hiding of it. For the sake of security, Bai Yunfei had sealed the two away in his space ring beforehand.

But when this ‘chance’ came, Bai Yunfei decided to seize the chance without any underhanded tricks! The boost the Flameblade Bracer gained wasn’t as strong as the ‘connection’ the Fire-tipped Spear gained with him, but it was still a lot stronger than what it was before. And so with this ‘chance’....Bai Yunfei could upgrade the Ardent Sun Gloves and the Returner Bracer while pointing the cause at it!

He didn’t know how ridiculous this excuse might be, but it was necessary to do for the future. He couldn’t exactly hide the two item’s new strength always. If he could use today’s events as his scapegoat, it’d save him a lot of trouble.

Judging by the expressions of the three, their reactions were still within the acceptable range of belief. And so, Bai Yunfei let out an inward sigh of relief....

.....

“Such a golden opportunity, and you’ve missed it! You idiot! With such a strong amount of power to fuel so many soul armaments, why didn’t you focus on one single one!” Unexpectedly, the next thing to come out of Huangfu Nan’s mouth wasn’t a compliment like Bai Yunfei thought, but a rebuke.

He had a grieving expression on his face before shaking his head to lament, “Such avarice, avarice indeed! Why did you choose to reforge four soul armaments? If you were to focus on one alone, who knows just how much stronger it would’ve gotten with his soul compatibility! Senior, you’re to blame here too! I told you we should explain things to the students, but you just had to make things even more complicated than it should be. Why let them try to understand it by themselves, look at this! Yunfei has lost out on this golden opportunity now!”

“Uh.....” Slightly distracted, Bai Yunfei could just barely understand that he was being blamed for using up all that power on multiple soul armaments. But....what was this ‘soul

compatibility’?

Snapping back to reality thanks to Huangfu Nan’s words, Kou Changkong’s face was slightly abashed. He coughed once, “It was a lack of consideration on my part, I didn’t think that....”

It never occurred to him that Bai Yunfei would have this much strength, but the thought was moot now that it passed. Thinking for a moment about what to do, he said, “But then again, this works out as well. If Yunfei really did use all of that power into one soul armament, who knows what accident would’ve happened? This isn’t too bad of a case, as long as he focuses on strengthening his soul compatibility bit by bit, it’ll work out....”

Still absolutely mystified by the topic regarding him, Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but speak meekly, “Master, what is this ‘soul compatibility’?”

“Soul compatibility denotes the degree of compatibility there is between you and the soul armament. When used for a long time, the soul armament starts to feel ‘familiar’ to the user. Usage becomes easier, and the soul compatibility reaches a very elementary level. We of the Crafting School have a greater understanding of soul armaments than any other due to our association with them. Our school has a secret that allows us to increase the soul compatibility between the soul armament and the user. When it reaches 50%, it becomes a soulbound armament. By using this secret when one reaches a Soul Sprite, one is able to create a soulbound armament. By nature, this is a complex situation to understand, but there is some special circumstances regarding your situation. There wasn’t a need to explain to you about the soul compatibility before, so I didn’t say too much about it before. But in any case, you’ll come to understand it soon enough.”

“Oh....” Bai Yunfei nodded his head. He understood what was being said just slightly, so he didn’t ask any more.

Kou Changkong gave Huangfu Nan a look and a nod of his head before taking out a red scroll from his space ring to give to Bai Yunfei.

“Take this back with you. I’ll give you a month to learn it, and after a month, you’ll be taught the art of crafting by me personally!”

Chapter 204: Fourth Elder

It was with shaking hands that Bai Yunfei accepted the red scroll from the man. He knew that he was considered a disciple right now, meaning that Kou Changkong would see him as an actual disciple to teach. Even moreso, even if he didn't pass the test in three months, Kou Changkong wouldn't take him lightly either.

Huangfu Nan handed a scroll to Ye Zhiqiu to take. "You as well. Focus on your training and you'll be taught by me again in the future!"

Seeing that both persons had taken their scrolls, Kou Changkong turned to Song Lin and Li Tichui still waiting at the sides. "Song Lin, Tiechui, take these two back to their rooms and urge them to train. If they have any questions, you'd do well to answer them to the best of your abilities!"

"Yes, master."

.....

Bai Yunfei and the three other disciples left first, leaving Kou Changkong and the other two elders standing in the cave.

Fishing out the 'key' from the gates, Kou Changkong closed the giant gates shut. The red light was immediately cut away from the area, turning the lighting back to normal.

Huangfu Nan himself was still staring at the direction in which Bai Yunfei left from with a faint smile. "What a unique youngster that Bai is...."

Nodding in agreement, Kou Changkong spoke, "Indeed. He has an unbelievable amount of potential. He wasn't able to reach four kilometers in the second examinations, but to withstand nine waves is a tremendous achievement. Junior Jiang Fan himself was able to withstand ten waves before creating the low-grade heaven-tier 'Redlotus Bloodsword'. I wonder where he is now.

“Though, the fact that Bai Yunfei was able to withstand nine waves is truly inconceivable as well.”

“Those soulbound armaments of his were things he already had before. I presume that red spear of his was given to him by Ge Heyun of the Fate School?” Huangfu Nan conjectured. “To try and improve four soul armaments at once and making two of them a soulbound armament, how daring. With the power being divided like so, I’m surprised he managed to make even one soulbound armament. This young fellow....should we say he’s greedy, or should we say he’s courageous?”

“There is yet another topic that confuses me greatly. How in the world did he survive until the ninth wave? With his current strength, I believed he would’ve lasted until the fifth wave at most.” Huangfu Nan questioned, “Why don’t we ask the....”

“There’s no need for that. It won’t tell us such a thing so easily.” Finally breaking out from his silence, the first elder interrupted Huangfu Nan. “It has been slumbering for several years now; even now, it’s probably asleep. I believe it best if we don’t disturb it.”

“Ah, I was only just talking to myself. Curiosity, that’s all it is.” Huangfu Nan gave a sage nod of the head to the first elder. “Its ‘test’ has always been far more accurate than the ‘examination’ we give. Does this mean to say that Yunfei’s strength is on par with Song Lin?”

Kou Changkong laughed in response, “Whatever the case, we shall find out in a moment. I await whatever pleasant surprise Yunfei will give us from here on out....”

.....

Having bidding farewell to Ye Zhiqu and Li Tiechui, Bai Yunfei followed Song Lin back to the Western Point.

Song Lin continued to glance at Bai Yunfei with confusion every so often as they traveled. Even now, the startling sight he saw was

fresh on his mind.

Some time passed before Bai Yunfei was no longer able to keep his silence, “Senior, with how much you’re looking at me, the other students might misunderstand something....”

“Oh....” Slightly embarrassed by Bai Yunfei’s banter, Song Lin shook his head and smiled. “I hope you don’t mind too much, I was only just curious....I never thought that you’d be this strong. Perhaps there was a problem with the crafting examination that day. Or perhaps you were hiding your strength?”

“Of course not.” Bai Yunfei denied. “I tried my best and still wasn’t able to reach four kilometers. The events that happened today was nothing more but luck....”

Song Lin’s lips quirked upwards as if he found the answer to be strange. “Luck? Do you think that luck would be enough to get you to the ninth wave? Do you know what wave I was able to make it to?”

“Er...how many?” Bai Yunfei asked.

“Eight.”

“.....” Bai Yunfei had no response to that.

“Haaa....now you know this is so unexpected to me. That was the very first time I saw any of the three elders so surprised. You must realize that when the fourth elder made it to the tenth wave, he was considered a genius that the Crafting School had never seen in several hundred years. You were only one wave less than him.”

Having his curiosity piqued by this topic, Bai Yunfei just had to ask, “Fourth elder? I’ve seen the first, second, and third elders before, but why haven’t we seen the fourth elder yet? The Western Point is under his management and has even the disciples staying there, so why hasn’t he taken on any disciples yet?”

“The fourth elder came quite late to the Crafting School. In fact, he and I came comparatively at the same time!” Song Lin

answered. “He had talent that I could never hope to catch up to however. When he was young, he was taken in by the previous master. By the age of forty, he was already a Soul Exalt, hence how he became an elder for the Crafting School. But because of the master’s command, he went out to travel the continent and rarely comes home. Since he’s always out, he can’t possibly take in any disciples.”

“Oh, I see....then what might be the name of the fourth elder?”

“The fourth elder’s name is Jiang Fan. He’s the current heir to the house of Jiang of Stonegrove City in the Northern Cliff Province. When he joined the Crafting School, he had to pass on his inheritance to someone else in his household to focus on his training.”

“Jiang Fan!” Despite the mental cry of shock in his head, Bai Yunfei’s face remained steadfast. So the one that had helped him way back in Stonegrove City had actually been the fourth elder of the Crafting School!

“There’s trouble then if this is true! He must’ve thought I was a student of the Crafting School and saved me. This means he must’ve seen me use the Fire-tipped Spear and the Flameblade Bracer and thought them both to be soulbound armaments. I might be a student of the Crafting School now, but....there’s a difference in timing. If he finds out about this, how am I going to explain things?” Bai Yunfei’s mind raced furiously.

Right as one problem was solved, another one came up equally fast, what a pain!

“Forget it, I’ll think about a solution when I’ve the time. Now if only the fourth elder were to come back every three to five years or something...” Bai Yunfei shook his head as if to clear away the troublesome thoughts in his head.

“What’s on your mind, junior?” Song Lin asked curiously when he saw Bai Yunfei shake his head.

“Eh? Oh, it’s nothing...” Deflecting the question, Bai Yunfei asked, “Senior, If I might ask, who is this previous ‘master’ you said earlier? Is that the master of master? Why haven’t we seen them either?”

“The previous headmaster, elder Zi Jin, retreated into isolation a long while back and is no longer in charge of the school. For that reason, none has seen him. The first elder was one of the few ones students from the previous generation that didn’t go into seclusion, so he holds the spot of the first elder so as to manage it while the grandmaster is away. Otherwise, he too would’ve secluded himself as well. The entire Northern Point of the Crafting School is the area where all of the grandmasters retreat into.”

“I see....” Bai Yunfei realized. In his mind, he thought, “That has to be true. A grand school like the Crafting School can’t possibly have only these few elders. The elders that remain here are in charge of overseeing the school then.” From what Song Lin said, there were multiple masters from the previous generation. This too must be one of the inside information that were common between all of the ten major schools on the continent.

“No wonder the Northern Point is a forbidden zone then! It’s a gathering zone of ‘monsters’! I wonder just how strong these previous masters are?” Bai Yunfei thought.

Another question popped up into Bai Yunfei’s mind, “Senior, what strength are the elders and master currently at?”

“Late-stage Soul King!” Song Lin spoke with pride. “They are Soul Kings! The second and third elders might not be geniuses, but there are many late-stage Soul Exalts that can spend decades without a single inch of improvement! Many Soul Exalts can spend their entire lives without hope that they’d ever reach the Soul King stage in fact. Master himself was sixty years old when he became a Soul King; I also heard that the entire empire had a gigantic commotion when he became one too.....

“It only took master twenty years to go from an early-stage Soul King to a late-stage Soul King, that feat alone is something many soul cultivators would be hard-pressed to replicate. But ever since he inherited the title of headmaster of the Crafting School, he rarely shows his strength, so not many know of his strength now....

“The first elder is also a late-stage Soul King.”

“Are the second and third elders also the disciples of the previous headmaster?” Bai Yunfei asked. The very notion of ‘Soul King’ was lost on him, but he was still surprised nonetheless. He just had to learn even more about the details of the Crafting School.

“No, the two elders were students of another master from the same generation of the previous headmaster. The previous headmaster Zi Jin had only three disciples. The first is our current headmaster, and the fourth elder Jiang Fan is the third disciple.”

“Eh? Then who is the second disciple?” Confused by the lack of description of the second, Bai Yunfei asked for clarification.

But the very mention of a ‘second disciple’ unexpectedly brought forth a vile look of hatred on Song Lin’s face. “Don’t call him the second disciple! He is by no means worthy of such a title!” He spat out.

Chapter 205: Secrets of Firebending

The sudden transformation of Song Lin caused Bai Yunfei to start in surprise. Cautiously, he probed, “Senior, have...have I said something wrong?”

“Er...” Realizing his loss of composure, Song Lin quickly apologized to him, “My apologies. I got lost in the moment.”

“Senior, there’s no need for you to apologize.” Bai Yunfei waved his hand once before carefully rewording his previous sentence, “Senior. This second....that person, what happened to him?”

Song Lin’s eyebrows furrowed together for a moment in vexation before he let out a sigh. “That man is a taboo to the Crafting School. It’s not important for you to know about him, but since you’re a disciple of the school now, you’ll learn about him eventually....Junior, I have to warn you, you must under any circumstances never mention him. Especially when the elders are in earshot, understood?”

The absolute severity on Song Lin’s face and the steel in his voice was enough for Bai Yunfei to understand that he was asking a question he shouldn’t be asking about.

Nodding his head, Bai Yunfei replied, “I understand. Thank you for your warning, senior.”

For the sake of eliminating the rigid atmosphere that was gathering around them now, Bai Yunfei attempted at trying to change the topic. “Senior, I have another question to ask. When the Crafting School was accepting students that day, there was a young girl at the base of the mountain. She....”

“Haha, are you talking about junior Rui?” Song Lin’s face revealed a smile. “Her name is Huangfu Rui. She’s the seventeen year-old daughter of the second and third elder. Her nickname is Dai Dai and is considered to be the princess of our school. She has a

pure heart and is quite the loving girl....”

“Seventeen? I could’ve sworn she wasn’t any older than fifteen....” Alarmed, Bai Yunfei asked, “How strong is she...?”

“You must have realized it that day. Haha, junior Rui is a middle-stage Soul Ancestor with talent that’s almost as strong as the fourth elder himself. But her situation is rather unique. She might be a middle-stage Soul Ancestor, the reasons behind it is a little complicated....You’ll learn about it soon enough.”

The roasted suckling pig immediately came to Bai Yunfei’s mind as well. “Ah, there was also that one pig called ‘Rou Rou’ or somet —”

A hand immediately flew up to interrupted Bai Yunfei from saying anything more. “Junior, let me tell you right here. Do not call the pig that name right in front of it. Only junior Rui is allowed to call it that name. Even the master and the elders aren’t allowed to do so! Don’t think that it’s some sort of pet for her, it’s a rare fifth-tier soulbeast, the Red Magiboar! Even I don’t know if I’d be able to beat it!”

“I....I see....” This information had been a surprise to Bai Yunfei. He knew that ‘Xiao Rou Rou’ was an amazingly strong fifth-tier soulbeast, but he never thought that it’d be that ‘special’. To have Song Lin talk about it so seriously, he knew that there was no room for jokes. “Senior, I will take note of that.”

“Good. Then hurry on back and make sure you learn the scroll the master gave you. If you have anything you don’t understand, feel free to ask me. Your fellow students can help you as well. They might be lower than you in ranking, but when it comes to the art of crafting, you aren’t any higher than them either.”

“I understand, senior.”

.....

The two had returned to the Western Point by now. Bidding

farewell to Song Lin with several parting words, Bai Yunfei returned to his own room—a small room in the middle of the courtyard sequestered for the rest of the disciples to live in.

Not even half a step into his own room, Bai Yunfei immediately began to make a diagnostics of his entire body to see if his body was in its most optimal state before then starting to summarize the days events and the ‘profit’ he gained.

Looking at the Ardent Sun Glove on his right hand, a notification popped up in his head.

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 2236

Additional Attack: 1060

Defense: 2580

Additional Defense: 1215

+10 Additional Effect: A fireball can be summoned to shoot down an enemy with power no greater than 50% of the equipment's total attack.

Upgrade Requirement: 160 Soulpoints

Thinking to himself, Bai Yunfei thought, “A fireball can be shot out...it’s similar to the ‘active trigger’ of the Flame Winged Blade. Plus...this fireball is long ranged?”

The Flame Winged Blade was limited to the area above his right arm, but the fireball that this Ardent Sun Glove could shoot out was a ‘projectile’. This meant to say it was a long-ranged attack. Thinking about it, this move felt similar to how the flame darts and fireballs acted like from in that cave.

In other words, Bai Yunfei would be able to attack like that as well?

The concept of materializing a fireball to be thrown wasn’t all that hard. Even Bai Yunfei could do it if he wanted, but the effects

would be severely weaker than ideal. If he wanted to make it stronger, it'd require even more soulforce. But with the effect of the Ardent Sun Gloves, he'd just need to use some soulforce and a little thought to summon a fireball with what....an attack of 50% of the gloves?

That was already more than 1500 points of attack!

"I wonder just how much soulforce is required to summon it? Too bad I can't test it out....

"Forget it, I'll try it out another time. There'll be time for that later, there's more important things to worry about right now...."

To what Bai Yunfei understood about this equipment right now, the most important thing to know was that if a large amount of soulforce was required to summon the fireball, it'd mean the consumption would be undoubtedly big on himself. For sure it'd be no smaller than what the maximum consumption would be for the Flame Winged Blade. The amount needed to summon a fireball whenever he wished would have to be determined first.

Not bothering to take out the Fire-tipped Spear to study, Bai Yunfei decided to put aside his thoughts about the soul armaments first in favor for the red scroll Kou Changkong gave him.

Focusinig, Bai Yunfei transmitted some soulforce into the scroll, and soon enough, several pieces of information began to float into Bai Yunfei's mind.

Several moments later....

Bai Yunfei's eyes opened once more with an excited light to them. It was a light that shined oddly on his face.

"The Secret of Firebending....This is the training method the students of the Crafting School learn to control fire....how mysterious. I never thought that there'd be such a complex way of being able to manipulate elemental fire. If I think about it now, the way how I 'controlled' fire before by gathering and condensing it

was the same as a kid would play with mud....” Bai Yunfei remarked to himself as he looked at the scroll in hand.

“There’s several dozen acupoints one needs to train along with just as many techniques to manipulate fire. Some of the topics involve several difficult aspects of how to change how the soulforce moves as well....

“And I’ve only a month to learn this, how limiting that is!” Bai Yunfei sighed.

“If I became a Soul Ancestor, my understanding of the elemental fire would definitely be higher than what it is now. Training in this would be a lot easier for sure. Too bad I’m not as advanced as I wanted to be....”

As it were, Bai Yunfei was a late-stage Soul Sprite. With the situation from earlier today, as long as he used the Upgrade Technique to use up his soulforce, he’d definitely see an increase of his soulforce. This would mean that his breakthrough into becoming a Soul Ancestor would be easily done if his soulpoints were to reach the range that denoted what a Soul Ancestor should have.

This was what Bai Yunfei thought at first. But now that reality had hit him....things weren’t as he initially thought!

When he had that feeling of being on the ‘verge’ of breakthrough, Bai Yunfei’s soulforce was approaching a numerical value of six thousand. This meant to say that a Soul Ancestor should have six thousand soulforce at the very least.

But!

Bai Yunfei’s soulforce was now way past six thousand, and he was still a late-stage Soul Sprite!

There was still a wall he hadn’t yet climbed stacked in front of him. No matter how ‘much’ soulforce he had, he wasn’t able to smash through this wall.

For that, Bai Yunfei knew that it was a matter of ‘quality’ rather than quantity.

The stages of a soul cultivator wasn’t only just about the amount of soulforce, it was also about how much one understood. Or how much he understood about elemental fire to be precise.

“The Secret of Firebending talks only about the aspects on how to manipulate elemental fire. As long as I understand something from the teachings, I should be able to make a huge improvement on how much I understand the elemental fire! It’s also the prelude on the art of crafting, so as long as I understand the basics, I should be able to learn the rest with ease. Let’s get started then....

“I’ll focus on training! In the Crafting School, there shouldn’t be any dangers since I’m a disciple now. I can focus completely on training!

“If I have the chance, I shouldn’t let it go so easily! In three months, I’ll definitely become a true disciple!!”

Chapter 206: Hidden Training For A Month

In a stone room about ten square meters in area, a giant flame was lit at the very center of the room. There was no wind blowing through this room, but the fire danced and flickered wildly left and right as if there was.

Then all of a sudden, the fire began to dance animatedly and twist in on itself in a patterned swirl. Not even a moment later, the fire had transformed into a two meter tall tiger made completely out of fire!

Absolutely life-like in its creation, the tiger let loose a ferocious roar that while brokered no sound, the stance it was in was still incredibly fearsome.

With a blink of the eye, the ferocious tiger immediately disappeared in a blaze of fire before the fire reformed to become a giant bird!

The bird then disappeared and transformed into a mighty ape that beated at its chest....

All sorts of beasts and birds materialized out from the flames, but not a single one was capable of sound when they formed.

After several more transformations, the fire began to gather in on itself to form a crimson-red fireball about two meters in diameter. Slowly rotating as it levitated upwards, the fireball soon reached the top of the room. As soon as it touched the ceiling, a single spear came boring out from the sphere!

As straight as it was long, the spear was clearly made up from the flames, but not a single flicker of the flame could be seen from the materialized weapon. For all intents and purposes, it looked no different than to a genuine spear.

Following the same time when the spear appeared, another longsword appeared by its side.

One after another, all sorts of weapons came pouring out from the fireball in rapid succession. Blades, axes, hookblades, and even hammers came raining down in a fan-shaped wave so that it were similar to a peacock fanning its tails, but these tails were instead weapons. Each one of these weapons being shaped so similarly to their actual counterparts with an equally intimidating air to them.

“Bang!”

With a resounding crash, a multitude of weapons separated itself from the ‘main body’ and were left to float in the air. As they detached themselves from the still rotating fireball, they became genuine weapons made from seemingly solid material.

In the center of the fireball from which these weapons clearly left from, there was the hazy figure of a person!

Sitting crossed-legged in this fireball, this person slowly stood up and extended his right hand outwards so that the fire around him contracted in size and was reabsorbed into his body!

Dressed in a gray robe, the man had such long hair that it covered both of his eyes. The raging fire continued to stream back into the man’s body without at all burning or even singeing his clothes.

Lifting his head, the man’s black hair blew aside to reveal the brightly-lit eyes behind them. A faint smile adorned his face as he regarded the circle of floating weaponry rotating around him.

This person was in fact Bai Yunfei!

Closing his eyes after watching the weapons circle around him once, Bai Yunfei began to concentrate on something for a while before finally breathing in a deep breath of air and then out. By the time he opened up his eyes and extended his hand out, all of the weapons in front of him collapsed back into a splash of fire and spread throughout the area in a sea of fire.

In the next second, Bai Yunfei appeared at the very heart of the swirling mass of elemental fire before reabsorbing it all into his

body.

With all the elemental fire absorbed into his body, the room was once again plunged into darkness. Silence reigned in the room for a while before another fireball the size of a washbasin materialized back into the room. Now that the room was lit up again, Bai Yunfei's right hand rose up to touch the fireball. It floated over his palm for a while as he studied it before he let out a sigh.

“And now I have strength like when senior Ge Yiyun showed me. He could do this with a flip of his hand. I thought it was amazing at first, but even now I can do it just as easily....” Sighing at the last bit, bai Yunfei began to mutter to himself, “I never would've thought that the Secrets of Firebending would be so easy to learn....Is it because I was always in contact with fire-related soul armaments? Was the Fire-tipped Spear instrumental in helping me learn how to react to the elemental fire? Or does this mean to say that this training method wasn't even hard to learn to begin with?

“There's still three days before the first month is over and I've already reached this far. I wonder if master would feel happy about this? I should spend the next three days perfecting this....I wonder what the art of crafting will be like...”

Bai Yunfei's right foot stepped towards the corner of the stone room where a stairwell was. This stairwell led straight to his bedroom right above.

In every room in the courtyard, each disciple had a secret room given to them for the sake of training by themselves in privacy.

Twenty-seven days had passed since the creation of his soulbound armaments. In just a few more days, Bai Yunfei would reach the one month mark of him being a disciple of the Crafting School.

For the past twenty-seven days, Bai Yunfei spent most of his time training by himself in this secret cellar. For the sake of learning the Secrets of Firebending, Bai Yunfei closed himself off from the

outside world completely almost. But every so often, he would leave his room to take a walk.

Opening the doors, Bai Yunfei's face was assaulted with the fresh air of nature. It had only just rained a while ago, so the courtyards were still wet and several of the wilting trees were dripping with raindrops still. The ground wasn't too muddy yet, and so the world felt as if it had underwent a cleansing to leave any spectator revitalized at the sight.

It was still early in the morning, so Bai Yunfei planned on taking a brisk walk around the courtyard and look around the place to relax a bit.

"Ehhh? Senior Bai, you finally came out!"

The moment when he walked out from his room, a pleasantly surprised voice made itself known to Bai Yunfei from his right. Turning to meet the source, Bai Yunfei could see a young boy in his teens run up to him with a smile on his face.

Reciprocating the smile, Bai Yunfei nodded his head, "Yes, I wanted to take a walk. Little Xian, what brings you out here?"

The boy had short hair to accompany his shy face. He was named Si Kongxian and was a fellow student of the inner school of the Western Point. Since he was in the room next to Bai Yunfei, he was considered to be his neighbor and would often times help Bai Yunfei bring some food and drink. As a honest and straightforward person, Si Kongxian was always willing to help another out with a smile on his face.

Pointing up to the living quarters in the area behind the mountain, Si Kongxian spoke, "I was about to bring some materials for senior Chen to use for crafting."

"Ah, I see." Bai Yunfei nodded. "I was planning to go there myself, let's go together."

Smiling, Si Kongxian nodded his head, "Okay! Let's go then. If

we're late, senior Chen will get angry.”

.....

Trekking up the path to the mountains, Bai Yunfei and Si Kongxian watched as the birds flitted through and through the grass. With the fresh air that blew through the place, one would've thought that it was spring time on the mountain despite it being in the winter.

Along the way, he and Si Kongxian talked to one another with idle chatter on what had happened in the past month.

Tian Yuhang was currently learning under Song Lin how to increase his soulforce so that he could become a Soul Sprite.

Mo Xiaoxuan and Xi Yan were able to make friends with the rest of the inner school soon after they joined them. Since they were both at the late-stage Soul Warrior stage, they were both in a hurry to try and reach the Soul Sprite stage and forge their own soulbound armament.

Zhong Xuhao and Liu Mang were both faring well in the outer school, but both were dead set on joining the inner school so they spent most of their time training themselves.

Many a times they came to Bai Yunfei in search for advice, but because Bai Yunfei was constantly training behind closed doors, the three of them never met up.

There wasn't much known about Ye Zhiqiu personally, but Bai Yunfei was sure that he too was focused completely on training.

Time went by quickly with how the two chattered to themselves. Soon enough, they arrived at the end of the path. An expansive cliff wall greeted the two, with holes scattered throughout the cave as if someone took a giant stick and tabbed incessantly into the cliff. Every ten meters or so, another cave would pop up with a height of several meters.

It was a strange area to behold, but it was where the students of

the crafting school crafted soul armaments.

The Secrets of Firebending was the foundational training method of the Crafting School. Learning how to manipulate elemental fire was something only a Soul Sprite could learn, so students below that stage could only focus on their training to hopefully become a Soul Sprite and learn the art of crafting. Sometimes, crafting soul armaments was a very loud task, and also ‘unsafe’, so creating soul armaments were forbidden from being done in the residential areas. When a student reached the Soul Sprite stage, they would be allocated a ‘forge cave’ for the sake of crafting soul armaments. They were nothing special and were essentially just regular caves. The only thing that might stand it out from any other place was the fact that these caves were extremely sturdy.

The first time Bai Yunfei came to this cave, he had been stunned for a very long time. Never did he imagine that the Crafting School where so many countless precious soul armaments were made would be done in places that were so....crude and simplistic.

But still.

With how the caves glowed fiery red with the elemental fire, the sight was exceedingly spectacular.

“Little Xian, did ‘senior Chen’ tell you which cave is his?” When they arrived at the ‘forge caves’, Bai Yunfei asked Si Kongxian for the next step.

The caves of the lower layer were for students of the outer school, and the upper layer were for students of the inner school. The caves at the topmost level were rare and few, but they were for the disciples to use.

Pointing at the cave to the top left side of the cave, Si Kongxian spoke, “Over there! The fourth row sixth cave from the left; that’s one of the caves for the inner school. Senior Chen is there crafting a soul armament. Senior Bai, can you wait for me for a second? I need to give senior Chen the materials he needs....”

“Boom!!”

Not even before Si Kongxian finished speaking, a thunderous crack exploded from the caves and shook the earth. From the cave he was only just pointing at, a giant pillar of fire and smoke blew out from the cave. For ten meters, the pillar of fire persisted for several more seconds before gradually coming to a stop....

“Uh....”

Chapter 207: A Challenge

“Uh....”

Both Bai Yunfei and Si Kongxian could only stare at the cave where the fuming fire had come out from.

A single person soon came out from the cave. Leaping down several hundred meters to the ground, the person collapsed straight away after touching the ground.

“Damn, fa—cough—failed again! Why are high-human tier soul armaments so hard to make?” His entire body was dark with ash as he tried to dust himself off in his anger. His clothes were singed in every area, and even parts of his hair had curled up from the heat. His face was as black as soot as if he was mining coal just now.

But it looked as if this person was accustomed to such an experience. Taking out a bottle of water from his space ring, the man poured it over his entire body. Allowing it to wash over his head and face, he then used his soulforce to evaporate the water over his body.

“.....”

Bai Yunfei had no words to say in such a situation like this. Instead, he quirked his lips and stayed quiet.

“Senior Chen, are you okay?” Si Kongxian was the first to react and rushed forward in concern.

“Blech!” Chen Huanghua spat out two globs of ashened spit from his mouth before turning to look furiously at Si Kongxian. Striding forward, he grabbed at Si Kongxian’s collar and pulled him up so that the two were now eye-to-eye.

“Bastard! I told you to bring me some cooling powder earlier, not now!! It’s because of you I screwed up!” Chen Huanghua shouted, furious that he had failed.

“Se—senior Chen, this isn’t my fault! I....I didn’t waste any time at all! You also said....you said that you would need cooling powder for the next soul armament too....” Si Kongxian stammered. He tried hard to break away from Chen Huanghua’s grasp. But as a late-stage Soul Warrior, how could he fight against Chen Huanghua who was already a late-stage Soul Sprite?

Struggling was useless, and Chen Huanghua’s grips were like iron. Such was his grip on Si Kongxian’s collar that even his neck was starting to feel constrained, resulting in the gradual reddening of Si Kongxian’s face.

“Drive! I bet you were trying to make me look even uglier, right?! You trash! You’re of the inner school, but you’re not even a Soul Sprite yet, I bet you’re jealous of the fact that I’m about to become a Soul Ancestor, is that why you’re trying to mess with me?!” Chen Huanghua babbled on furiously, adamant that Si Kongxian had been the reason for his failure. With one hand clenched tightly, he cocked it menacingly behind his shoulder and then let it loose towards Si Kongxian’s face!

There were several other students around, but not a single one of them had gone forward to help Si Kongxian when he was being bullied. Many of them didn’t seem to care much, but some were showing looks of annoyance. Despite that, they were seemingly too afraid of Chen Huanghua to step in.

Already, Si Kongxian closed his eyes and brace himself for impact.

But out of nowhere, a black and purple gloved hand came from the side and grabbed onto Chen Huanghua’s wrist!

It was Bai Yunfei who had stopped Chen Huanghua. Without letting go, he spoke. “We’re all students of the Crafting School. An act like this is too much....”

Startled by his appearance, Chen Huanghua quickly recovered in a moment. “Who are you? This is none of your business, let go of

me!”

In his anger, Chen Huanghua had pulled back his right hand. His opponent had ‘sensibly’ let go of his wrist, but then Chen Huanghua suddenly realized that his left hand suddenly went numb; as if he was holding onto nothing.

Looking there, he realized that Bai Yunfei had taken the opportunity to break Si Kongxian away from his grasp.

Walking backwards with Si Kongxian in tow, Bai Yunfei started to speak with a low voice, “Si Kongxian is also of the inner school. Shouldn’t you be delegating material procurement to the outside school? The fact that you’re blaming him on your failures is a little laughable, don’t you think?”

Since Chen Huanghua had only just failed in creating a soul armament, he was in a very sour mood. He initially wanted to beat Si Kongxian as a way to release some steam; as he had already done so multiple times before. A minor altercation like this would never make its way back to the seniors, so Chen Huanghua had always believed he had some leeway in this. Never did he imagine that today would be the day someone would come to meddle in his affairs.

He snorted after listening to Bai Yunfei speak, “Him? Of the inner school? Hah! He’s just trash that even a good majority of the outer school can beat! Someone like him should have been tossed out from the inner school a long time ago! What’s with you anyways? If I say he did wrong, he did wrong! Stop meddling!”

His eyes looked closely onto Bai Yunfei. A spark of recognition washed his eyes before they blinked several times in surprise. He started to laugh, “Oh, I see who you are now....You’re that new ‘temporary’ senior.....I haven’t seen you in a month, so I could hardly recognize you. My mistake....”

His words were sickeningly sour to the ears, and one could clearly hear the contemptuous scorn he had for Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei was taken back, but it wasn't a surprise that Chen Huanghua would know him. Back when they first entered the Western Point, Song Lin had introduced all of the new students there to the ones before. But since there were far too many people, Bai Yunfei wasn't able to take note of everyone. This person in front of him had left no impression on him, so he was curious on why this person had so much hostility towards him now.

It was then that Si Kongxian tugged at Bai Yunfei's sleeves from the side. "Senior Bai," He whispered. "He's one of the more outstanding members of the inner school, Chen Huanghua. In the crafting examination, he was able to walk 4.7 kilometers, but he still wasn't made into a disciple. His talent as a soul cultivator is extremely high too. When we both joined five years ago, he was still on track of becoming a Soul Ancestor while I'm still trying to become a Soul Sprite...."

He realized then that it was because of the fact that he became a disciple by exception that this person held such hostility towards him.

It was no wonder too, if someone who tested beneath him in the crafting examinations was given the opportunity everyone could only dream of, he'd be extremely jealous of their good fortune too.

Unfortunately, there would undoubtedly be many of such people.

"Si Kongxian, don't think I didn't hear you! You think you can get away with mocking me?! Watch yourself, I'll get you one day or another!" Chen Huanghua glared at Si Kongxian menacingly before turning back to face Bai Yunfei with a 'polite' smile. "Well now....what was your name again? Oh right. Senior Bai, what brings you here today, have you already learned the arts of crafting?"

Even though he was being mocked so openly, Bai Yunfei felt disinclined to do anything but to frown to himself. Since he was just here to take a walk, Bai Yunfei waved his hand, "I'm just here

to look around, don't mind me."

And so with that, Bai Yunfei glanced at Si Kongxian so that the two of them could prepare to leave.

"Ah, senior Bai, I heard that you fought senior Fei Nian from the Southern Point to a draw? I'd like to compare notes with senior, would you be willing to share some advice with me?" Not even before Bai Yunfei could even turn around, Chen Huanghua's mocking voice was already starting to speak out.

Pausing, Bai Yunfei turned to quirk an eyebrow to him, "Not interested."

Chen Huanghua had clearly expected such an answer however and replied with that strange voice of his, "Oh, I get it. Senior Bai is a disciple, the very first 'exception' that only walked 3.7 kilometers in the examinations....A person like that is special indeed. Of course he'd not bother to lower himself to teach us juniors of the inner school...."

"....."

Ah. So this is what it mean to want a foot after winning an inch...

Bai Yunfei didn't want to quarrel with him, but the way Chen Huangfu was deliberately trying to challenge him was already doing its job of angering him somewhat.

He glanced around the area.

There were already plenty of people gathered around here, and even more people were starting to walk out from their caves to observe what was going on at the entrances.

Bai Yunfei could tell that everyone was already expecting a fight to break out. Some of them were already eyeing Bai Yunfei the same way Chen Huanghua was looking at him.

"No one's going to admit it out loud, but they're most likely angry with the fact that I became a disciple through an

exception....” Bai Yunfei sighed. “If I want to stay here for a long time, having everyone treat me like this wouldn’t be a good thing....”

Bai Yunfei thought to himself for a while longer. Just as Chen Huanghua was about to say something else to rile Bai Yunfei even more, Bai Yunfei looked up at him.

His face was calm, but his eyes were glowing brightly and his lips were smiling.

“Alright! I’ll compare notes with you then!”

Chapter 208: Rock Slicer

“If you’re going to use me as a stepping stone, then don’t mind me if I use you myself!”

Bai Yunfei looked up at Chen Huanghua with brightly-lit eyes and a smile on his face, “Alright! I’ll compare notes with you then!”

“Uh...” The sudden change in attitude had caught him off guard, but Chen Huanghua recovered just as quickly with a joy in his heart. “Haha! This is what a disciple should be like! Come then, please teach me well, senior!”

The two of them moved away from one another so that some distance could be had.

Chen Huanghua swung his right hand out. A “bang” followed suit as a giant sword suddenly materialized in it. The blade of the sword was nearly as big as door itself, and when it fell to the ground, there was a noticeable crater.

“This is my soulbound armament, the Rock Slicer! Senior Bai, be careful, my blade knows no end!”

“Senior Bai, are you really going to fight him?” Asked Si Kongxian. He stared fearfully between the two before whispering in an even lower voice, “He’s a late-stage Soul Sprite. He got a high-earth tier soul armament after his examinations, but turning it into a soulbound armament turned it into a low-heaven tier armament. He’s really strong, I think you should...”

Bai Yunfei shook his head and smiled appreciatively, “Don’t worry. I’ve faith in myself. Wait on the outside, I’ll be back later.”

This ‘outside’ he spoke of was the external ring the other students were giving him. There was a five hundred meter area given for the two as an ‘arena’.

Helpless, Si Kongxian walked off to the side and stared at the two

nervously.

.....

Thinking about something, Bai Yunfei took off the Ardent Sun Gloves he wore on his hand and stored it away in his space ring. Noticing the skeptical eyes of everyone that saw his actions, he explained, “This was the heaven tier soul armament given to me as my reward on becoming a disciple. I won’t use it for the sake of a fair match.”

In a brilliant flash of red, the Fire-tipped Spear appeared in his hand. Twirling it around him and then stabbing it into the ground, Bai Yunfei exclaimed, “This is the soul armament I had when I joined the Crafting School. Well then, junior Chen, please learn all that you can!”

The fact that Bai Yunfei was storing away the heaven tier soul armament he got as a ‘reward’ for becoming a disciple had infuriated Chen Huanghua.

Back when he first tried so hard to become a disciple, he had failed to do so. All he got for his troubles was a high-earth tier armament which was later turned into a low-heaven tier soulbound armament.

Thusly he was angry that someone who could only walk 3.7 kilometers managed to get something he did not!

The more he thought about it, the angrier he got. Without another word, Chen Huanghua let out a yell before lifting his sword up into the air. Twirling the sword over his head as if it were a feather, Chen Huanghua’s foot stepped down hard in front of him with such force that a crater was left in the ground. In the next burst of action, he dashed towards Bai Yunfei.

From the looks of it, he was adept in battles of strength.

The two of them weren’t too far away from one another, so Chen Huanghua’s explosive leap forward had propelled him exceedingly

close to Bai Yunfei. He brought the sword down onto Bai Yunfei, but rather than using the sharp edge of the blade, the flat side of the sword was used instead!

The very first action Bai Yunfei took had been equally surprising to everyone there. Rather than dodging to the left or right or bringing his spear up to block, Bai Yunfei took a half step backwards with his right foot. Priming his weight on that foot, he swapped his spear over to the left and immediately punched forward with his right fist!

Ninefold Fist Force!

“Pow!”

The metallic ring of the blade striking flesh resonated through the air with a crisp tone, and the entire audience clenched their right fists as if feeling the phantom pain.

What shocked everyone however, was the fact that Bai Yunfei remained unmoved from his initial position. Both of his legs were rooted slightly deeper into the ground, but Chen Huanghua on the other hand had been driven back three steps!

“This....”

Many of the audience had been dumbstruck by the sight. Even the ones watching the fight from their caves quirked their eyebrows up from surprise at the sight.

Chen Huanghua staggered backwards several more steps before finally stabilizing himself. Even now, his right hand was shaking slightly from the impact. “So strong! What kind of soul skill is this?” He thought to himself in shock.

It wasn't a habit for Bai Yunfei to yell out the name of the move he was using, so there'd be no way Chen Huanghua would know what it was. Bringing his Fire-tipped Spear up, Bai Yunfei immediately charged towards Chen Huanghua after just a small moment of time for him to regain his breath.

It was true that Chen Huanghua was jealous and wasn't accepting of Bai Yunfei's success, but he wasn't so arrogant that he'd ignore the skills Bai Yunfei had. Having experienced the first trade off of blows, Chen Huanghua was fully convinced that he should get serious in this match. Grunting out loud, he charged straight at Bai Yunfei as well.

Crossing paths once again, sword met spear as the two became entangled into a close combat fight.

Chen Huanghua fought vigorously with an offensive style that was powerful in its offense and all-protecting in its defense. At times the sword could be used as a shield to block. In other words, he had both offense and defense in one single package filled with energetic movements.

On the other hand, Bai Yunfei was like a leaf drifting in the wind. With the Wave Treading Steps, his feet moved one after another so that he was akin to the wind itself. There were times where he'd just narrowly escape danger, but each movement he made had been done skillfully and easily.

After a dozen exchanges or so, Bai Yunfei began to have his doubts. He noted that his opponent was completely focused on using that giant sword of his rather than using any of his other soul armaments.

Wasn't a fight between students of the Crafting School done with soul armaments? Back when he fought Fei Nian, that person had used a multitude of strong soul armaments....

He had fallen for a misconception.

Not every student of the Crafting School liked to use soul armaments one after another to fight. Many of them loved to fight with just their soulbound armaments. It was only under the most special of circumstances that they'd decide to use another soul armament. Chen Huanghua was one of those people.

The soulbound armaments of the Crafting School were strong without a doubt. Even if a soul cultivator were to use a heaven tier soul armament to fight against Chen Huanghua's Rock Slicer, they'd not be a match for him. Bai Yunfei was of a different make, however.

His Fire-tipped Spear was also of the heaven tier (after being upgraded), and was also a soulbound armament. In terms of soul compatibility, Bai Yunfei's spear was much higher than Chen Huanghua's sword.

The more Chen Huanghua fought, the more he felt as if he was being choked. His opponent was fighting at an even quicker pace than he was, and his own strength wasn't able to secure the advantage for him. Their soul armaments were 'equally matched', and from the very beginning, Bai Yunfei's face had been completely calm. This fact alone was enough to make him angrier beyond angry.

"Don't get so cocky!!" Right after Bai Yunfei dodged yet another strike from him, Chen Huanghu began to sneer. Exploding with anger, the amount of soulforce rising from his body began to increase in amount. His muscles strained together, and the sword that was raised in the sky came flying down onto Bai Yunfei's shoulder with even more speed than before!

In all honesty, Bai Yunfei was beginning to grow confident in the fact that his strength had increased since the past. A smile crept onto his face as he regarded his opponent. Even though Chen Huanghua was clearly stronger than before now, Bai Yunfei wasn't worried. Gripping onto the Fire-tipped Spear from both sides, he brought the spear up to receive the sword.

But the amount of power in this blow was considerably large! Even though Bai Yunfei wasn't forced backwards, his feet dug an inch deeper into the ground. Right before he could deflect the sword away, Bai Yunfei noticed a 'sinister' smile creep onto Chen Huanghua's face. In the next second, the giant sword began to

explode into a dazzling light of orange!

Startled by the sight, Bai Yunfei then felt a rush of elemental earth start to explode outwards from the sword and cover his entire person!

His very first instinct was to retreat backwards, but even as he started to implement the plan, Bai Yunfei realized that his legs were suddenly unable to move!

Looking down, Bai Yunfei saw that the ground around his feet were squirming as if something inside was wriggling in it. In an instant, the earth 'crawled' up to his legs and sealed them into the ground!

Taking advantage of the stunned look on Bai Yunfei's face, Chen Huanghua brought his sword back up. With the same sinister smile and mocking eyes, he swung the sword back down onto Bai Yunfei who couldn't even move anywhere now!

Chapter 209: Of Doppelgangers and Victory!

Taking advantage of the stunned look on Bai Yunfei's face, Chen Huanghua brought his sword back up. With the same sinister smile and mocking eyes, he swung the sword back down onto Bai Yunfei who couldn't even move anywhere now!

He was a merciful person, his blade would only target the outermost side of Bai Yunfei's right shoulder so that not much damage would be dealt. In the best case scenario, Bai Yunfei would be able to dodge completely, but Chen Huanghua would be able to make a simple follow-up for the victory. Other than that, Bai Yunfei would dodge and come out with a grievous wound.

Bai Yunfei was shocked, but not as shocked as Chen Huanghua thought. As the giant sword came whistling down on his shoulder, Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up brightly. Stabbing the spear into the ground with his left hand, Bai Yunfei swung his right arm up. Soulfence not as weak as Chen Huanghua began to blaze out from Bai Yunfei and gather around his right arm, and just moments later, a 1.6 meter long blade made of fire materialized over it!

The Winged Flame Blade!

Billowing tall with great flames, the blade flew up in a perpendicular fashion from Bai Yunfei's arm. If neither of the two stopped what they were doing, then the giant sword would hit the Flameblade Bracer, and the Winged Flame Blade would strike Chen Huanghua in the shoulder!

The instant appearance of the blade caused Chen Huanghua's eyes to dilate. The fact that such a terrifying looking blade could appear out of nowhere had been startling, but his sword would continue in its downward stroke. He twisted his hand so that the blade flipped to the flat side coming down, simultaneously blocking the flame blade coming up at him.

“Poof!!”

Upon impact, the blade dissipated like a wave striking against a hard surface and engulfed Chen Huanghua’s entire body in a bubble of fire!

“Swish!”

An arc of orange light cut through the ball of fire, clearing it apart and revealing the angry looking Chen Huanghua. Taking a step forward, he prepared to attack again.

But in that next step, something caused him to look startled!

The feeling of danger assaulted his senses, and from just the corner of his eye, the Fire-tipped Spear was coming straight at him!

And...a second one!!

Two Bai Yunfei’s were coming at him from the left and right with a spear in hand ready to strike!

“Mirror images!” Chen Huanghua had ‘realized’ what was going on at first glance, but whichever one that was ‘real’ was lost on him.

Even the soulforce coming from the two were completely identical, making identifying the real one from the fake one impossible!

“Damnit, what kind of soul skill would be capable of mirror images like this!” Left with no time to authenticate the real one from the fake, Chen Huanghua let loose an angry roar. Gritting his teeth, he grasped his sword and swung at the spear wielding Bai Yunfei from the right.

“Clank!” There was a metallic ring of metal hitting metal.

“Got it!” Chen Huanghua’s face lit up excitedly.

“Pow!!”

The elation he was only just feeling fell away to a stinging sensation from the left part of his waist, causing him to stagger backwards a step.

“Wha—what’s going on!!” Chen Huanghua’s mind went blank. He just simply couldn’t understand what was going on in front of him; was the one on the left the ‘real’ one?!

Almost instinctively, Chen Huanghua grasped his sword tightly and swung at the two incoming people...only to hit nothing but air! Absolutely nothing was in front of him!

“.....”

And another second later, his entire person suddenly went stiff like a statue as if afraid to move even a finger....

The glowing red point of a spear was placed right next to the right side of his throat. The point of the spear was burning brightly, but all Chen Huanghua could feel was a freezing sense of cold throughout his body.

Right behind him, Bai Yunfei could be seen holding the spear with the same indifferent expression on his face.

The entire area went quiet; not a single person could do a thing but stare there in absolute shock. Bai Yunfei’s surprise counterattack had been completely unexpected by everyone.

Not a single one of them had thought that this battle between strong opponents would be so easily resolved.

.....

Seeing how Chen Huanghua’s sword was stabbed disappointedly into the ground and how its owner was standing perfectly still, Bai Yunfei smiled.

His right hand shook slightly so as to store away his spear. “Junior Chen, thank you for letting me win!”

Chen Huanghua’s entire body was shaking dreadfully and his

face was a pale shade of white. He was unable to accept such a result. He had been beaten, and by a complete mystery to boot!

But the facts were as they were. No matter how much he might be unwilling to accept this result, he was thoroughly beaten by this new 'senior' right in front of everyone else.

Slowly turning around, he cupped his fists together with a reluctant face. Unwillingly, he spoke, "....Senior Bai. You win. I've nothing else to say."

The bravado he had been displaying before was surprisingly nowhere to be found here. He had no excuses, and even Bai Yunfei could see that there was a slight change to how he was acting now.

With a jovial smile and wave of his hands, Bai Yunfei replied, "We were only just comparing notes, there's no need for junior Chen to pay too much attention to this."

"Senior Bai, I've stuff to do so I'll be leaving first." Unable to handle the strange looks he was getting from everyone else, he spoke quickly to Bai Yunfei before turning around to leave.

"Junior Chen, one moment!"

"Senior Bai, what other advice did you want to give?"

"We of the same school should always be willing to help one another. I hope that in the future you'll try not to make trouble for Si Kongxian and the other juniors."

"....." Chen Huanghua was silent for a moment before replying, "If that is what senior Bai says, then I will do so in the future. Goodbye!"

.....

The people watching from the outside cleared a path for Chen Huanghua to walk through before he finally disappeared from sight.

The group of people began to talk to one another about the fight

they had just bore witness to. No matter if they were students of the inner or outer school, they talked. But when Bai Yunfei's eyes fell on them, they all turned away and the conversations went quiet as if they were afraid of him.

Not even bothering to speak warning or threat to the crowd, Bai Yunfei looked back to the awestruck Si Kongxian nearby, "Well then, let's go back."

Si Kongxian had been so excited from the match that his face was flushed red, and even now, he was still enthralled by the fight he had just seen. Giving Bai Yunfei a look of worship, he spoke, "Sen—senior Bai, you're...you're amazing! I thought that you two would fight to a draw, but the fight was over that fast! What was the last two moves you did? It was so cool! Was that a soul skill or something?"

Smiling, Bai Yunfei nodded his head, "Something like that."

And so under the fearful eyes of the other students there, Bai Yunfei and Si Kongxian started to walk away from the caves. Not before long, another person came calling out to them, "Junior Bai, one moment!"

Halting in his footsteps, Bai Yunfei turned around to watch as a purple-robed young man come walking towards him. The fact that Bai Yunfei was being called a 'junior' meant that this person was also a disciple.

This person was called Ling Yan, the third disciple of Kou Changkong and a middle-stage Soul Ancestor.

Chapter 210: 'Armament Skills'!

With Bai Yunfei being included as one of the disciples, there were now five one of them on the Western Point: The first, Song Lin. The second, Xiao Nanren. The third, Ling Yan. The fourth, Bai Yunfei (for now). And the fifth, Tian Yuhang, (Although young, he was by all rights still a senior).

Of the three older seniors, Bai Yunfei was most familiar with Song Lin and Xiao Nanren since the two of them had came into contact with him when overseeing the examinations. The only time he saw the third disciple Ling Yan was during the 'social group meeting'. Bai Yunfei had been completely preoccupied with training afterwards and so social interaction was at an all time low for him.

Si Kongxian managed to give a respectful greeting to the third disciple Ling Yan before the man then turned his attention to Bai Yunfei. "Junior Bai, it'll be a month since you joined the Crafting School in three days. I wanted to talk to you before then, but you've been stuck in training for the entire time. How goes it, have you finished with the Secrets of Firebending?"

"Thank you for your concern, senior Ling Yan. My training has gone without a hitch so far."

"That's good then." Ling Yan nodded his head. "It was a surprise to see junior Bai come out here. I was blown away by your strength to say the least. You must have held back your strength when you fought with Fei Nian that time.....Though I'm sure even now, you've yet to show your true strength, right?"

He had been one of the few who were on hand to watch the fight in its entirety.

With a modest smile, Bai Yunfei replied, "Senior Ling Yan, you give me too much credit. It was just luck, that's all. I'd like to thank you giving me this chance by not stepping in though."

“I only just got here myself,” Ling Yan smiled. “I was just deciding on what to do when you finished up the battle so quickly....Everyone in the school has been thinking the same thing about you when you entered the school, so it’s good that you did what you did. I’m quite impressed actually; if anything, I’m sure they’re thoroughly convinced now. As long as you can show success in crafting, there shouldn’t be anyone else that’ll gossip about you.”

“Yes. Please rest assured, senior, I’ll try my best so that master and everyone else won’t feel disappointed.” Bai Yunfei smiled before taking in a deep breath. “Senior Ling Yan,” He began, “I’ve a question I was hoping you could help me answer.”

“Hm? What question is it? Say it.”

“In that fight just now, what was that last attack junior Chen did with his Rock Slicer...?”

“Oh, you mean that last move? That was the Rock Slicer’s armament skill, the ‘Earthen Confine’. With it, he can temporarily restrict his opponent’s movements.

“‘Armament skill’?” Bai Yunfei asked.

“What? Junior Bai, do you not know what armament skills are?” Ling Yan asked.

Bai Yunfei was embarrassed, “Uh, I....I never heard of them before.”

Ling Yan smiled and began to explain, “Because of the materials that were used to create a soul armament, there’ll sometimes be one or several different elements focused into the soul armament. The higher the grade, the more noticeable it’ll be. Junior Chen’s ‘Rock Slicer’ was made from an extremely high quality ore of elemental earth and a primal stone, allowing for the sword to hold a tremendous amount of elemental earth in it. When a soul cultivator uses a soul armament, they can make use of the

elements stored within them with the soul armament as the intermediary. This way, they can make use of an element that they aren't able of using to begin with. Thus, a person is able of using moves they couldn't normally use by using the soul armament in their place. These moves are called 'skills of the armaments', or 'armament skills'. In a way, they can be thought of as another version of soul skills."

Taking out a sparkling green longsword from his space ring, Ling Yan continued to explain, "For example, this earth-grade soul armament has the wind element in it. I'm personally incapable of practicing the elemental wind, but I can still unleash blades of wind with this. These are known to be the most basics of 'armament skills'." With two flicks of his sword, two blades of wind shot out from the sword and faded away into the sky.

"Armament skills have their strengths and weaknesses and easy to understand ones and complex ones depending on several aspects. These aspects are thusly said to be the grade of the soul armament, the strength of the user, and the familiarity the user has with the soul armament, or their 'soul compatibility'. Soul compatibility isn't something only we of the Crafting School know. But if not for special circumstances of those in the outside world, only a few are capable of bringing their soul compatibility to 50% and creating a soulbound armament. By extension, armament skills are something that only the most excellent figures and the Crafting School understand to a greater degree."

"Armament skills...." Bai Yunfei grew quiet as a result of Ling Yan's explanations. He was extremely surprised by all these newfound things. "This....this is just like the effects of the equipments!!"

.....

Bidding farewell to Ling Yan and Si Kongxian, Bai Yunfei returned to his room so that he could be in peace.

Now that he knew about the existence of ‘armament skills’, Bai Yunfei found himself to be in a new state of amazement. The fact that these ‘armament skills’ were the same as the ‘equipment effects’ gave him plenty to think about. He just had to know what differences or similarities there was between the two.

In a more simplistic observation, there were ‘active’ skills, and ‘automatic’ skills.

Armament skills were skills that the user could use to make use of the elements within the armament in substitution of the user’s own affinity. By manipulating this secondary element, it could be melded into the level of a ‘skill’.

It could be explained in the same way a soul skill could be explained, but a soul armament was required for an armament skill to be used.

The equipment effects were similar to armament skills, but they required a ‘trigger’ to then ‘automatically produce’ an armament skill.

Using an example to this simplistic explanation so far, Bai Yunfei could use the ‘Crescent Moon Blades’. They were both soul armaments with an affinity for wind so they could release a blade of wind with a command. At the same time, they had an additional effect that could automatically create a blade of wind and shoot it out without needing to command it.

Automatic and instantaneous. These two aspects were where the equipment effects had an advantage over the other. But the most important aspect was strength.

Of course, equipment effects couldn’t all be explained by using the theory behind armament skills. Being able to slow down another, inflict dizziness, sending them flying, or even the ‘doppelganger’ effect of the Fire-tipped Spear were beyond the realm of possibility of what armament skills could accomplish or even explain.

The Upgrade Technique by all rights was an existence that wasn't a part of this world. By blending in with the laws of this world, a new 'law' was made where equipment could change after being upgraded. Whatever the 'laws' bestowed onto the equipment were unexplainable.

"This means I can use the additional effects of some equipment and pretend they're armament skills as an excuse. And the 'doppelganger' effect of the Fire-tipped Spear can be passed off as a soul skill.....I shouldn't be under too much suspicion then."

Thinking about the battle he had just had, Bai Yunfei thought, "I've grown a lot stronger after spending a month learning the Secrets of Firebending. My soul compatibility with the Fire-tipped Spear is a lot stronger, so I can use it more efficiently as well. The might of the +12 effect isn't anything to sneeze at either. I haven't been able to test the additional effect of the Ardent Sun Gloves though....

"I never thought that I'd be able to learn so much in just a single month of being here. Even if I didn't become a disciple, the trip here would be so worth it.

"It's a shame that I haven't become a Soul Ancestor yet. I'm clearly at a bottleneck, so these things should be taken slowly and with patience rather than rushing it....

"In just three days, I'll be able to learn the art of crafting, I can't wait...."

Chapter 211: The Art of Crafting! (First)

In the main point of the Crafting School one fine morning three days later.

Behind the grand hallways, a magnificent building was built with all sorts of pavilions adorning the beautiful landscapes. There were lush forests and beautiful lakes on this part of the mountain, and so it was befitting for the headmaster and other elders to reside here. There were also many libraries for people to enjoy, armories forbidden for the general student populace from entering, many classrooms for the sake of teaching, drill grounds and other training-related buildings here.

Northwest from there, a single courtyard could be seen. And in this courtyard, there was a secret room built underneath the ground.

The room was three hundred square meters in area and had several fist-sized white crystals for illumination. The entire room glowed brightly as a result, and in the center stood a middle-aged man with a younger man listening earnestly to him.

This younger man was Bai Yunfei, and the middle-aged man speaking pleasantly in front of him was the headmaster of the Crafting School, Kou Changkong.

The entire room was abundant with elemental fire, so the temperature of the room was quite high.

This was because of Bai Yunfei's performance just now. He was showing Kou Changkong the fruits of his labors after studying the Secrets of Firebending and learning the ways to manipulate fire.

.....

“Very good! Bai Yunfei, you've met my expectations. In a single month, you were able to learn the Secrets of Firebending to such a degree, that much alone is hard enough to believe.” Kou

Changkong nodded his head pleasantly, “The Secrets of Firebending is an important primer to the art of crafting, I cannot emphasize that enough. From here on out, you must concentrate even more on your training so that your proficiency with the elemental fire grows. This way, learning the art of crafting will become twice as easy for half the effort.”

Bai Yunfei nodded his head, “Yes, master! Your disciple will do so earnestly!”

“Haha, very well. I understand that you are anxious to start learning the art of crafting, so I won’t say anything more.” Kou Changkong remarked.

“And now, I will teach you our craft!”

Excited beyond belief, Bai Yunfei began to concentrate with all his focus in fear that he might just miss a word Kou Changkong might say if he failed to keep his emotions in check.

The earnest expression on his face had led to Kou Changkong from nodding his head in satisfaction. Keeping a calm voice, he spoke, “The art of crafting is complicated, but in layman terms, it follows the steps a normal blacksmith might follow for forging a normal weapon. Our school emphasizes three phases; liquation, compoundment, and refinement!

“The three phases are divided into two sub steps, which is later divided again into countless segments.

“Liquation—the act of smelting the ingredients and picking out the best parts. This is the most fundamental step of the crafting process, as without a good understanding and handling of materials, a good soul armament will not be crafted.”

“Compoundment—the act of infusing materials and molding the basic shape. During the refinement process, every soul armament has different needs for different materials. These materials might be the same, but the amount of it won’t be. By understanding the

balance and composition of compounding the materials, a perfect soul armament can be crafted. Whether you are making a blade, a sword, a staff, a club, or anything else, this is the time in which the basic shape is formed.

“Refinement—the act of condensing and refining the shaped product. This is the most crucial and the last phase in the process before a soul armament is complete!”

After summarizing the three phases to Bai Yunfei, Kou Changkong paused to give Bai Yunfei time to digest the information.

“And now, I’ll demonstrate everything from start to finish, so look closely and experience it for yourself.”

With a wave of his hand, Kou Changkong took out a black stone the size of a washbasin into his hand, “This is an ordinary piece of vermiculite. As the main material, what we first need to do is rid of its impurities by liquating it.”

“Bang.” A fireball burst into life from his hand, consuming the vermiculite in his hand. Right before Bai Yunfei’s eyes, the vermiculite began to grow smaller and smaller while Kou Changkong explained, “A different intensity of elemental fire is required for every different material. When it comes to liquation, an incredibly hot flame isn’t everything. If the intensity is too much, then the material will be completely burnt up. So the better the control one has with elemental fire, the more controlled your manipulation can be. Of course, not all materials have to be completely liquated. Some special materials, like the rare minerals and herbs of nature, or even the flesh and fur of whatever soulbeast can be used as materials. But without a proper understanding of soul armaments and how they’re crafted, using those will be impossible for you.”

As he spoke, the fist-sized vermiculite began to take on the form of a blob of gold liquid. Spinning and turning around over Kou

Changkong's palm, the liquid let loose a golden light that was almost as bright as the fire that was surrounding it.

“The armaments I'll be creating right now are the most basics of one where only one main material is required. The more high quality ones will require a few to even dozens of materials.” Kou Changkong remarked as he flipped his hand. Dust and pieces of ore appeared out of thin air over his left hand before making its way over to his right. Amongst these materials was a golden primal stone. “When a primal stone is added to the mix, the power is increased. A primal stone of a different element can be added, but that will add to the difficulty of the process. Several more materials will be needed to stabilize the composition.

“And then there is the compoundment phase.” Kou Changkong's eyes narrowed slightly so as to concentrate on the task. The materials that were floating over his left hand slowly made its way over to the right hand where the fire was still burning over his palm. The fire-type primal stone was turned into a crimson liquid and blended into the pure mix of vermiculite. “The materials needed to stabilize the composition of a soul armament differs, and so the composition will always differ from soul armament to soul armament.”

After liquifying the rest of the floating materials, he had them consumed by the fire in his hand. Compressing the fire, he started to stretch it longer and longer until it took on the shape of a small dagger made of fire. The liquid was still hovering over his palm, but it looked as if the fiery dagger would be the receptacle in which the liquid would be used to be poured into it and be turned into an actual dagger made of a solid substance rather than fire.

“This is what we call ‘casting’. When you manipulated the elemental fire into the shape of weapons, this is an application of the technique.” Kou Changkong spoke. “Up next is the most important part, pay close attention now!”

A wave of soulforce pulsed out from Kou Changkong's body as

he spoke, causing the fire over his palm to shudder. Then, like a surging wave of water in a storm, the fire began to tremble while still maintaining the shape of a dagger while the liquid started to slowly flow through the shape.

All Bai Yunfei could sense was that the soulforce Kou Changkong was pushing out was undergoing a constant transmutation. At times, it rippled fast, and at other times, it moved slowly. Sometimes, it was strong and vigorous, at others, it was almost non-existent. For twenty-eight variations, his soulforce continued to change in how it moved before finally coming to a stop. The fire over Kou Changkong's hand had started to change as well from when his soulforce was being fed into it. The liquid that had been casted into the fire mold had underwent this series of change as well before finally coming to a stabilized calm.

“Bang!!”

There was an explosion and a wave of hot air that scattered through the room with Kou Changkong at its epicenter. Bai Yunfei had been momentarily blinded by the light that accompanied it, and his clothes danced furiously like a banner out in the winds. But even still, Bai Yunfei tried his best to stare at the center of the explosion—namely the space above Kou Changkong's hand.

The crimson light slowly abated from sight, revealing a small golden dagger floating above Kou Changkong's hand. With the aid of the several glow stones in the room, the dagger glistened beautifully.

“And so, a soul armament has been crafted!” Kou Changkong stated calmly. Smiling when he saw the pensive look on Bai Yunfei's face, he asked, “Yunfei, do you understand now?”

“Uuuhh.....” Bai Yunfei thought for a moment before speaking in a soft voice, “Your disciple is a slow-witted one. When master began to fluctuate his soulforce, I only understood about seventy percent of it.”

“Haha, understanding seventy percent of that is already quite decent for a first attempt. Trying to memorize the pattern in which the soulforce must fluctuate is pointless. You must learn by experiencing it yourself. I was only demonstrating it to you so that you could see and understand the process of crafting and what points must be carefully trained. There’s no need to try hard to understand the concept, just remember the feeling. The art of crafting will come to you with time and experience.”

“Yes, your disciple will take note of that.” Bai Yunfei replied.

“Very well. We shall end our lesson here then. Go back and think about what you’ve learned today. Engrave the details into your head. Tomorrow, I will teach you how to refine a soul armament.” Kou Changkong spoke. Waving his left hand, the golden dagger flew towards Bai Yunfei, “I’ll give you this dagger for you to look at. Hopefully you’ll learn from studying it.”

Accepting the dagger, Bai Yunfei bowed respectfully, “Thank you master. Your disciple will take his leave then.”

“Very well. You may leave.”

.....

Chapter 212: Huangfu Rui (Second)

On the stone path back to the Western Point, Bai Yunfei’s heart raced with excitement. Each step he took along the passage between the points had been filled with thoughts of when Kou Changkong had crafted that dagger in front of him.

A single soul armament had only taken a short amount of time to form right in front of his very eyes. If the art of crafting was possible of creating such an armament like that, how could he not feel excited?

Equipment Grade: High Rare

Attack: 467

Upgrade Requirement: 78 Soulpoints

An admiring light entered Bai Yunfei’s eyes when he took a look at the soul armament Kou Changkong created. “He created a high-grade human-tier soul armament in an instant, that’s the headmaster of the Crafting School for you! This is the strength of a late-stage Soul King....”

Kou Changkong had said before that studying the dagger he made could help him understand some of the finer aspects of crafting so Bai Yunfei didn’t dare try to upgrade it until he could confirm no vital changes would be had. But he himself knew that he could very well upgrade the quality of a high-grade human-tier soul armament to a low-grade or even middle-grade earth-tier soul armament!

For no reason at all, a surge of impassioned confidence spread through his heart. Clenching the dagger tightly into his hand, Bai Yunfei stared at it with a determined look, “One day, I’ll reach the same level master is at. No....I’ll surpass him!”

Storing away the dagger for safekeeping, Bai Yunfei continued on his way back to the Western Point. On the way, he came across several students who called out to him respectfully with words such as ‘senior Bai’.

In return, Bai Yunfei would greet them as well.

Three days had gone by since his match with Chen Huanghua. News of the outcome had spread throughout the entire school since he was the ‘special’ disciple. He was a figure many people felt to be important as a topic, so there were just as many people paying attention to him. Some of the students who had shared similar perspectives as Chen Huanghua had thusly decided to save their comments and scorn for him for the timebeing.

After all, Bai Yunfei was able to easily defeat the late-stage Soul Sprite, Chen Huanghua. Strength like that was surprising to a good majority of the students--and some of those students had expressed that surprise physically.

On the way, Bai Yunfei came across Zhong Xuhao who said that he and Liu Mang were doing quite well for themselves. Aside from playing errand boys for several other seniors, they spent their time training so that they could reach the Soul Sprite stage and learn the art of crafting.

Several more words were exchanged between the two before Zhong Xuhao had to leave at once--he was still in the middle of a delivery for a senior.

Not before long, Bai Yunfei had arrived at the focal point where the main, western, southern, and eastern point all converged together.

And just as he was turning onto the road towards the Western Point....

“Heehee, wait up for me, Xiao Rourou! Dai Dai can’t keep up with you!” A silvery voice drifted through the air, startling Bai

Yunfei at the familiarity of the voice. Stopping where he stood, Bai Yunfei turned his head towards the east.

What greeted his eyes was a single young girl dressed in a pink flowery robe running straight down the path from the Eastern Point. As she ran, the braid on the left part of her head bobbed up and down while her lovely face was flushed with excitement.

It was the daughter of the second and third elder, the one named Huangfu Rui. Also known by her nickname, ‘Dai Dai’, the loveable young girl..

Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but laugh at the sight of her, but when he realized that she was calling out for ‘Xiao Rourou’, Bai Yunfei gave a small start. He remembered Song Lin’s warning that it was an incredibly strong fifth-tier soulbeast, the ‘red magiboar’. Looking around himself, Bai Yunfei tried his best to look out for the red’ suckling pig’.

“Hrnfh hrnfh....”

A faint snorting sound emanated from his right side, causing Bai Yunfei to whirl around. Just two meters away from him, a boar with four white legs stared at Bai Yunfei with a look that could only be anthropomorphized to be a look of ‘observation’ that another human might give to another....

“Uh....” Bai Yunfei’s mouth twitched slightly as if unsure of what to say or do.

“Ehhh? Brother Strawhat! It’s you!!” Just at that moment, Huangfu Rui had discovered just who the boar was staring at and flew towards Bai Yunfei with excitement.

Bai Yunfei came back to his wits at the sound of Huangfu Rui addressing him by ‘brother strawhat’. His lips twitched slightly at the nickname, but it was no use.

Turning to her, he smiled, “Ah, junior, how’re you? It’s been some time since we last met.”

Running over to him, Huangfu Rui first pounced over to the boar that was ‘staring’ at Bai Yunfei and grabbed it into her arms. Rubbing its head with her own cheek, she began to laugh out loud. “Brother strawhat, I heard what you did from senior giant! Heehee, you’re also a disciple of uncle headmaster now! Why haven’t you come play with me yet, I almost forgot about you!”

“Er...senior giant?” Bai Yunfei asked for clarification.

“The big disciple of dad~”

“Oh, senior Li Tiechui...” Bai Yunfei sweatdropped. “I’ve been focusing on my training for a while now, and I didn’t know where you were, junior. When I’ve time, I’ll definitely come play with you when you want.”

When faced with such a loveable child such as her, Bai Yunfei had subconsciously adopted a well-meaning smile on his face.

“Okay then! No take backsies!” Huangfu Rui cracked a smile and a giggle before looking back to the small white pig in hand, “Xiao Rourou is our witness! If brother strawhat goes back on his word, you have to help me teach him a lesson, heehee....”

“Hrnfffh....” The small pig twisted its head helplessly.

The eyebrows on Bai Yunfei’s face stood up, “This white boar is that ‘red magiboar’! Is this its normal shape and size? Then why was it so much like a ‘suckling pig’ before then?”

Bai Yunfei was more than aware of the fact that there were some soulbeasts that could shapeshift. The Quickshade Bird was capable of turning as big as a roc itself, but it normally kept itself to a size of a small sparrow. But not only could this pig change its size, it could change its appearance.

The fact that Huangfu Rui had told the pig to ‘teach’ him a lesson had frightened Bai Yunfei however. “Don’t speak like that,” Bai Yunfei thought. “Even if a child’s words carry no weight, what if that fifth-tier soulbeast really did try to do as you say, I’d be the

one who'd suffer!" Waving his hand, Bai Yunfei quickly changed the subject, "No no, no need for that. I said that I would, so I will! When I've the time, I'll come find you to play, okay?"

Tilting her head, Huangfu Rui responded, "Haha, then you have to come, okay! Even Brother Fei Nian said that he wanted to fight you again!"

"Fei Nian?" Bai Yunfei asked, "Why does he want to fight me?"

Looking to Bai Yunfei with a naive expression, the girl responded, "When dad punished brother Fei Nian, I was the one who helped him out of it! But then I said that brother strawhat was really cool with how you were gliding around the place, even cooler than brother Fei Nian! Brother Fei Nian decided then that he wanted to fight you again to see who was really the cooler one....so when are you going to fight him? Dai Dai wants to watch!"

Bai Yunfei quirked his lips, but he said nothing to answer her. Mentally, he was groaning to himself, "Because of what you said, that guy Fei Nian went out to find me that one night! I heard he came by to find me when I was training too, it's a good thing Si Kongxian turned everyone else away...."

"Dai Dai, where are you? Wait for your senior, don't run off now...."

Just at that moment, another voice called out for Huangfu Rui. From there, Bai Yunfei could see two figures come running towards them. One of the two was the pink-robed senior Lian Lingmin from the Eastern Point; she was the one who spoke out just then.

Looking to her side, Bai Yunfei could see that there was another long-haired girl with white robes.

But when he saw her face, his eyes widened in surprise.

"Isn't that....?"

Chapter 213: Meeting Tang Xinyun Once Again, But as a Junior?

When Bai Yunfei looked to the white-robed girl to the side of Lian Lingmin, he was stunned for just that one moment.

“Isn’t that...Tang Xinyun?!”

Yes. That woman was indeed Tang Xinyun!

Whilst he was shocked, Lian Lingmin and Tang Xinyun had already made their way towards Bai Yunfei. Tang Xinyun had clearly noticed Bai Yunfei as well, as her beautiful eyes had been wide open as she looked back at Bai Yunfei.

“Haha, junior Bai, so you were here as well? We left on such a hurried note that day, but I heard that you did well for yourself. What I heard really surprised me.” Lian Lingmin smiled as she greeted him.

“Uhhh...ah? Oh, haha, hello senior....” Jolting to a start, Bai Yunfei hurried to greet Lian Lingmin.

Nodding her head with a smile, Lian Lingmin turned to address Tang Xinyun, “Fifth junior, this is the junior Bai that I was just telling you about. He managed to become a disciple of the headmaster, but since you were in closed-door training, you didn’t hear ab—”

“Hm? Fifth junior, what’s wrong?” Pausing halfway through her words, Lian Lingmin realized that Tang Xinyun had a look of stupefaction on her face. Casting an eye to Bai Yunfei, who had a similar look on his face, she started to connect the dots in bewildered wonderment, “No way...you two know each other?!”

“Er....yes....yes we do senior.....” Bai Yunfei laughed sheepishly as he turned to face Tang Xinyun, “What a coincidence it is to meet you in this place of all places, miss Tang.”

Tang Xinyun had come to her wits by this point. Replying with a smile, she spoke, “Lord Bai, I didn’t think we’d meet again....Thank you for saving me last time.”

“It was nothing,” Bai Yunfei waved his hand, “I had Tianming send some people to look for you, but they never did, we didn’t think that you’d leave so quickly....I hope you didn’t come across any more troubles.

“Where’s aunty Zhao? I remember her wounds, is she alright?”

“That can’t be said to be just ‘nothing’....” Tang Xinyun sighed to herself. “Thank you for your concerns, lord Bai. Aunty Zhao is just fine, after she sent me to the Crafting School she went straight home.”

“Hold on hold on,” Lian Lingmin cut straight into the conversation in stupefaction, “Junior Bai, fifth junior, you two really do know each other? Isn’t that a bit too coincidental? And what was that you just said? Something about saving someone?”

“Miss Tang and I know each other. We traveled along the same way once in the Northern Cliff Province, but she later traveled ahead of me. I stayed behind for some time for several matters, but I didn’t realize our destinations were both the same....” Bai Yunfei explained.

Tang Xinyun quipped in to add to the explanation, “When I and my traveling partner came into trouble, it was lord Bai that came to save us. From there, I headed straight for the Crafting School without stop....”

“Oh, I see....” Lian Lingmin nodded her head sensibly, “Seems like fate has it for you two if it brought you two not only to the Crafting School, but as disciples. Isn’t this what they call in the old legends the ‘red string of fate’?”

“Er....” Bashfully shaking his head, Bai Yunfei spoke, “It was coincidence, just a coincidence....”

“Chiiirp!!”

A melodious warbling came echoing from the skies above, causing Bai Yunfei to turn his head up to look. Just above him was the sparrow-sized quickshade bird named Xiao Bai. Circling around for a descent, the bird let loose another happy chirp—it was evidently happy to see Bai Yunfei once again.

“Waaah, Xiao Baibai!!” Huangfu Rui let loose an excited cry as she tossed down the white boar in her hands to jump up and down. “Xiao Baibai, come down and play with me! We can play ‘flying rope’!”

“Chiiirp!”

Even while it was flying, the quickshade bird was clearly reeling away from the direction it was traveling in. Almost falling to the ground, the bird was quick to flap its wings and turn off to the opposite direction....

“Xiao Baibai, don’t run away....hehe, if I catch you you’ll have to play with me!” Huangfu Rui’s feet sparked to life with a red glow before she chased after the quickshade bird with lightning quick speed.

From above, the quickshade bird shudder and started to fly even faster....

“Hrnfff!!” Letting loose a resentful sound, the dropped pig gave chase to the girl right away....

“.....” Bai Yunfei was utterly dumbfounded.

“Ah, Dai Dai, don’t run off like that, wait for me!!” Realizing that Huangfu Rui had ran off, Lian Lingmin was in a panic to follow her. Turning her head as she ran, she shouted back at Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun, “Junior Bai, fifth junior, I’m sure you two have plenty to talk about, so go ahead and talk, I’ll go find junior Huangfu!”

And in a flash, Lian Lingmin disappeared into the direction

Huangfu Rui had gone.

“Wow. This...” Bai Yunfei wasn’t sure what exactly to say about this situation.

Managing to smile, he turned back to Tang Xinyun, “How cute junior Huangfu is, to be so carefree and happy like that.”

“Yes, she’s a very pure child. A child anyone would want to cherish. That’s why master, second elder, and even the rest of the school dotes on her so much. No one wants to see her hurt in any way....”

She turned her head to look to Bai Yunfei, “Lord Bai, are you....are you alright from last time?”

He knew that she was talking about the moment before he had used himself as a shield so that she and Zhao Mancha could escape. Nodding his head, he smiled, “Thank you for your concern, but don’t you see that I stand before you today just fine?”

“That’s good then....” A breath of relief was taken in secret. Ever since she and Zhao Mancha escaped, she had been thinking about going back and finding Bai Yunfei, but Zhao Mancha had forbidden it. Since then, she was worried about Bai Yunfei and how she had ‘broken’ the connection between her and him. If Bai Yunfei were to come out of that day an injured man, she would forever feel ashamed.

Not willing to dwell on the issue any longer and risk some sort of misunderstanding where Tang Xinyun would think he’d want compensation, Bai Yunfei changed the topic, “Miss Tang, when did you arrive at the Crafting School? From what senior Lian said, you became the disciple of the third elder? How haven’t I seen you yet then?”

“I came fifty days ago when there was only half a month to the day of examinations. I thought it would be extremely difficult to become a student, but I was fortunate enough to meet master on

her way back to the school. She brought me up the mountain where I found out that I had ‘high’ talent for elemental fire as well as extremely high talent in crafting. Master decided then and there to take me in as a disciple, but everything up to then had been so surreal to me....

“You already know that I was a late-stage Soul Warrior at the time, so even now, I wasn’t able to breakthrough to become a Soul Sprite. I’ve heard that only those who become a Soul Sprite are able of making their own soulbound armament. Ever since I joined the school, master has taught me the method of crafting one, so I spent a month training in isolation.

“Just yesterday, I was finally able to become a Soul Sprite and came out from my isolation. Because of that, I’m completely behind on everything that happened in the Crafting School so far.”

“Ah, I get it now....” Bai Yunfei realized. “Then, have you made your own soulbound armament yet?”

A look of pride appeared on Tang Xinyun’s face. “Of course. It’s a shame that I wasn’t able to make it a middle-grade heaven-tier soulbound armament, but master said that there’d still be a chance for me. As long as I can increase the soul compatibility with it, I’ll be able to increase the grade of the armament. I’ll just have to train and wait until then....”

Knowing exactly what she was talking about, Bai Yunfei spoke, “Ah, yes. Don’t worry too much about it, miss Tang. There’s an extremely special place the third elder will most likely take you to. I’m sure you’ll be able to upgrade your soulbound armament there and increase your soul compatibility with it.”

Startled by his words, Tang Xinyun asked, “Ah? Lord Bai knows about it?”

“Yes,” He nodded his head, “I’ve been there already and made my own soulbound armament. I was already a late-stage Soul Sprite when I entered the Crafting School, so I missed the first chance to

make one sadly, but master was....”

As the two stood next to the mountain trail, Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun began to chat to one another. Starting from the matters before his coming to the Crafting School, Bai Yunfei summarized the tale of what happened with the house of Ye back in Gaoyi City while Tang Xinyun would supplement some of her own narration.

They were like old friends. Pleasant and happy as could be.

And so they talked until it was high noon.

Taking notice of the color of the skies, Bai Yunfei spoke, “Miss Tang, it’s getting quite late now. This morning I was being taught by the master on the art of crafting, so I really must be getting back for some reflections....”

Tang Xinyun nodded her head as well, “Yes, I should be getting back. Another time then?”

“Haha, alright. Since we’re of the same school now; disciples no less, we should treat each other like so.”

“Is that right?” A devilish smile appeared on Tang Xinyun’s face. “I came to the school half a month earlier than you did. You should call me ‘senior’ then.”

“Uh....”

.....

As he watched Tang Xinyun walk away, Bai Yunfei had a smile on his own face, “Miss Tang....you’ve really brightened up quite a bit!”

“Her, my senior? Haha...”

Chapter 214: Learning How to Craft

When Bai Yunfei returned to his room, he did nothing else but spend the entire day pouring over the golden dagger Kou Changkong crafted. Every detail, every edge, and every mark was burned into Bai Yunfei's head as he tried his best to learn something from it.

The second day had been spent in this same exact manner.

“.....”

“Yunfei, I've already told you the most important details regarding the liquation phase. It's up to you to try for yourself, let your teacher see what you've accomplished thus far.” Kou Changkong spoke to Bai Yunfei with a smile. Waving his right hand, a black fist-size ore appeared in his hand. “This is an identical vermiculite ore to the one I used the other day. Go ahead and try for yourself.” He handed it over.

“Yes, master.” Bai Yunfei replied dutifully. Taking the ore, Bai Yunfei studied it for a moment before sucking in a deep breath.

His eyes honed in on the ore, and soulforce began to pulsate and gather in his right hand.

Soon, a “bang” accompanied a dazzling flash of light as fire ignited in his palm, consuming the ore into its nonsolid body.

Grasped by the flames, the vermiculite ore floated several inches upwards. Combined with an even larger output of soulforce, the flames grew even stronger and stronger so that the ore was gradually shrinking smaller and smaller.

Along with its shrinkage in size, the impurities within the ore was gradually being burned up, leaving behind a golden hue for the remaining parts.

Kou Changkong gave a smile and a nod at this sight.

But then Bai Yunfei suddenly upped the intensity of the flames, the golden liquid that was seeping out from the remaining parts of the vermiculite started to boil.

“Not quite there yet, Yunfei. Continue to liquate it.” Kou Changkong spoke.

Bai Yunfei nodded his head grimly and pushed even more soulforce into his hand so that the golden liquid started to shrink in size.

After a while, Kou Changkong’s voice suddenly came calling out in warning, “That’s enough! Yunfei, stop!”

“Ah!”

A mental cry was let loose from Bai Yunfei as he cut off the flow of elemental fire, but it was too late. The previously golden liquid had exceed the limits of what it could sustain and was engulfed by the flames. As the flames died down, the darkened remains of the liquid could be seen pooled over his palm.

“M-master....” It was with a heavy heart that he looked to Kou Changkong in shame.

“Haha, don’t worry. Not being able to control the fire is normal at first.” Kou Changkong shook his head to console him. “Experience is achieved from countless failures. Don’t think that you can do everything in one try, that way of thinking has no way of bettering your ability even at the most important moments.”

This time, Kou Changkong materialized a pile of vermiculite about half Bai Yunfei’s height and placed it to the side before handing him a single red stone. “Continue on then. I won’t warn you this time, you’ll have to manage slowly by yourself.”

“Yes, master.”

And so he accepted the ore so that he could try again to liquate it....

Failure.

Failure.

Failure.....

Four to five hours passed by now, and Bai Yunfei had only just managed to separate the essence of the fire-stone from its impurities.

The amount of red liquid in his hand was only just half the size of his fist, but Bai Yunfei held it over his sweat-laden head with pride.

Kou Changkong smiled. “Very good. We may now move onto the second phase. Yunfei, have a try with these three supplementary materials....”

.....

An entire day had passed for Bai Yunfei to study and experiment each phase of the process under Kou Changkong’s supervision. Each time he tried however, it would end in failure.. By now, the amount of materials he used was surely not under 500 kilograms.

If someone from a smaller school or family were to see the destruction Bai Yunfei had unleashed on these stones, they would’ve assumed that he had gone crazy....

Night fell with Bai Yunfei still unable to pass the second phase of ‘compoundment’. Each attempt he tried in synthesizing the materials together failed due to his lack of control over the elemental fire. The materials were either burnt up, or they were synthesized in the wrong amounts.

“Bang!”

In a fiery explosion, the golden liquid that had been contained in the fire splayed across the ground as if they were molten iron and sizzled on the ground.

Another failure.

“Whew....” Bai Yunfei sucked in a deep breath. His entire

forehead was wet with sweat due to just how long he had been concentrating. With the amount of consumption of his soulforce and all the failures, Bai Yunfei was reaching the end of his rope.

“Yunfei, we’ll stop here for tonight.”

Just as Bai Yunfei reached for another vermiculite ore, Kou Cangkong’s voice called out from the side. Crestfallen, Bai Yunfei responded to him, “Master, your disciple wishes for one more attempt....I might just succeed this time....”

Kou Changkong shook his head, “Yunfei, you are far too impatient. Such a trait is unsuitable if you wish to continue crafting. We’ll conclude here. Go back and reflect on what you learned for tomorrow.”

In silent reluctance, Bai Yunfei looked to the remaining pile of vermiculite ore, “Yes, master.” He replied in disappointment. “Your disciple will be returning then....”

.....

When he got home, Bai Yunfei didn’t even bother to eat or drink. Instead, he spent the rest of his time laying on top of his bed and looking up at the ceiling in a daze.

“The art of crafting is....is so hard! I can’t even get one of the most basic steps working....” Bai Yunfei sighed. The art of crafting was really far too rough. The amount of control over fire in some areas and the output of soulforce in a steady pattern in another area was so incredibly taxing that it was mind-boggling. If he were to try and pinpoint just how much soulforce he had left, Bai Yunfei would guess that barely half was remaining....

For a moment longer, Bai Yunfei remained dazed. But then his eyes hardened and his hand clenched tightly to form a fist. The disappointment receded away from his eyes so that determination could replace them.

“It’s only the first day, how could I be defeated so easily? Even if I

really fail, I'm just accumulating experience through failure, like master said! I just need to keep accumulating experience so that I can succeed!"

Driving away the dispirited emotions from his mind, Bai Yunfei shut his eyes and began to 'replay' the memories of today. Every failure he was met with was studied, and every little part he succeeded in was dissected so that he could learn from the details. Every time Kou Changkong gave a warning, Bai Yunfei would think hard about it and make mental notes for improvement. One by one, he learned, and over and over, he studied....

.....

On the second day, Bai Yunfei returned to Kou Changkong for tutelage and tried again to attempt the second phase.

Failure.

He tried again.

Failure.

He tried again.

Failure.

He tried again.....

An entire day passed by yet again, and Bai Yunfei was still unable to get pass the second phase.

The third day was the same.

The same for the fourth day.

And the fifth day.

.....

On the tenth day, Bai Yunfei was finally able to make it to the third phase of 'refinement'. But even then, he was stopped by another obstacle....

In his hands, a three inch long short dagger was already taking

form in a brilliant show of light. Staring hard at it, Bai Yunfei was practically howling to himself, “This is the last hurdle! The intensity of the flames is at seventy percent, let me succeed!”

“Bang!”

A wave of fire rippled throughout the cave, but the red dagger in Bai Yunfei’s hand was still in one piece.

“I--I did it! I’ve fi—” Elation burst through his heart for a split moment before a sudden ‘crack’ shattered his thoughts. Looking down, Bai Yunfei could see a single crack running through the dagger, and in the next second, the dagger fractured into pieces.

“.....”

An intense wave of disappointment ran through Bai Yunfei’s head. Clenching hard, the dagger was reduced to powder in his hands....

Chapter 215: Forging Cauldron

Ashamed of his failure, Bai Yunfei turned to Kou Changkong, “Master, your disciple has failed you again...”

But instead of reprimanding Bai Yunfei, Kou Changkong smiled. “Yunfei, why do you think that you’ve failed me?”

“Your disciple has practiced for ten days, and not even a single soul armament was made even after all master’s careful instructions. I’ve...”

“You’re wrong.” Kou Changkong interrupted Bai Yunfei’s small tirade of ‘self-blame’, “Let me tell you something. I’ve been nothing but satisfied for the past ten days. In fact, you can say I’m quite impressed. What you’ve shown so far has exceeded my expectations.”

“Eh?” Bai Yunfei wasn’t sure if he even heard right. Almost unsure if he should ask, he started to speak, “Master, do you mean that I....”

“Correct. The amount of progress in the last ten days is an extremely high achievement in itself. Your control over elemental fire is far beyond what I expected. It would be no exaggeration for me to say that your aptitude so far is way better than your seniors when they first started to learn!”

“Uh....”

Kou Changkong’s sudden praise of him had knocked Bai Yunfei for a loop. But even in his daze, the feeling of disappointment he felt was quickly thrown out so that joy and a little amount of pride could make their way in.

“Yunfei, do you know why you are failing to make even an incomplete soul armament?”

The question mystified Bai Yunfei.

“Is it because my control over the elemental fire wasn’t enough....?”

“No, your control was fine. In fact, even if you were making a low-grade human-tier soul armament, you’d have more than enough to spare!”

“What?” He still didn’t quite understand what Kou Changkong was getting at.

“The reason why you are failing to craft even a single armament is because you are missing an extremely crucial item!” Kou Changkong smiled.

“What...what item?” Bai Yunfei asked.

Unwilling to keep Bai Yunfei in suspense, Kou Changkong waved his right hand just once. Following a bright flash of red and a “thunk”, something fell down by Bai Yunfei’s side.

“A crafting cauldron!”

Eyeing the object, Bai Yunfei could see that it was about half as tall as he was and two meters squared in area. The cauldron had a red twinkle to it, and waves of elemental fire could be felt emanating from it.

Continuing to speak, Kou Changkong spoke, “This is an essential must for all students of the Crafting School. A lot of aspects must be relied on the cauldron for something to be crafted. A good cauldron could increase the chance of success many times over for when a soul armament is being crafted. This on cauldron is a normal one. To craft items such as spears, halberds, and battle-axes, a long-shaped cauldron is required. Of course, crafting without a cauldron is possible, but your strength is without a doubt not yet at such a level....”

“So even the Crafting School has a key ‘item’.....” Bai Yunfei realized what Kou Changkong was getting at.

But at the same time, a question arose in his mind. “Then why

didn't he....”

“You must be thinking ‘why didn’t I give you a crafting cauldron to begin with?’, correct?”

Nodding his head in an honest reply, Bai Yunfei listened as Kou Changkong speak, “You are a disciple of mine. The more potential you have, the bigger the expectations I’ll have for you. The past ten days were for you to understand just how hard crafting a soul armament is. From today onwards, you’ll be more cautious in your craft while also helping you understand the many questions that might occur. As your master, I must teach in a way that you will learn the subject in a comprehensive matter.”

“You might not understand what I’ve said so far, so let me teach you one of the many uses of the cauldron. Craft a soul armament with it and you’ll understand what I’m saying then.”

Kou Changkong walked over to where the cauldron was and placed his right hand by his side. Pushing his soulforce into it, the cauldron began to light up before a fire burst into life from the inside.

“All crafting cauldrons are created using materials that harmonize greatly with fire. Through it, one is able to make and maintain a fire with ease.” Kou Changkong explained. Waving his left hand, a small clump of vermiculite ore was thrown into the cauldron and transformed into a fist-sized glob of pure essence almost instantly.

“There’s countless of blocks in the cauldron which can be influenced in any way to change the shape and outcome of the soul armament. Supplementary materials can be placed in these slots as well so that they can be compounded at any time.” Kou Changkong waved his hand to fill up several of the slots. With a crackling sound, a mold of a small dagger was formed at the bottom with the fire engulfing the materials and filled up the dagger mold with its liquid. “While the cauldron provides the mold, you must make

sure to maintain the fire as it burns the materials so that the shape and compounding can go without a problem.”

“During the refinement process, the cauldron can be used to push your soulforce in without deviation.” He paused here for a moment, and at the same time, a wave of soulforce was suddenly pushed out in such a huge drove that Bai Yunfei’s heart was momentarily stunned. Imbued by the red light, the flames in the cauldron disappeared, and in the next moment, a dark red dagger flew up into Kou Changkong’s hand.

A soul armament had been crafted in practically half the time it took for Kou Changkong to make one for Bai Yunfei ten days prior to this!

From start to finish, Bai Yunfei had been completely transfixed on each and every action Kou Changkong made. Even his words were engraved into Bai Yunfei’s mind.

Knowing that Bai Yunfei had been so intent on watching, Kou Changkong spoke, “Yunfei, you come and try!”

Letting out a deep breath, Bai Yunfei nodded and took two steps forward to walk up to the cauldron’s side.

.....

Following what Kou Changkong had said and done, Bai Yunfei’s hand pressed against the cauldron and fed in his soulforce to rekindle it.

Inserting a piece of vermiculite ore and several other materials, he begun the process to liquate, compound, and refine them....

Step by step, Bai Yunfei came to realize something—

This was an effortless task!

When the flames disappeared, a throwing knife with an icy-cold sheen was left at the bottom of the cauldron.

He was shocked.

Crafting a soul armament was....this easy?

Yes! Compared to the previous attempts which took ten whole days to make one, Bai Yunfei had only needed a short ten minutes to make a soul armament with ease!

After his shock dissipated, Bai Yunfei slowly took the silvery throwing knife into his trembling hands. The make was ordinary and was three inches long and one finger width wide. This one was designed exactly the same as the most basic design from the manual he had about throwing knives.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Attack: 181

Upgrade Requirement: 50 Soulpoints

It was an incomplete soul armament, but it was already extremely close to being what a soul armament would be. Caressing the blade, Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up with an extremely excited light.

Nodding his head in satisfaction, Kou Changkong spoke, “Very good. Yunfei, remember this feeling. The art of crafting is...exactly like this!”

Storing the throwing knife away, Bai Yunfei bowed to his master, “Yes, master!”

“It’s getting late, so let’s end things here.” Kou Changkong smiled. “Don’t try to craft anything more today, but remember this state and savor the feeling of the craft. Take note of everything that happened in these past ten days and commit it to memory. With your strength, you will surely make huge improvements in the future. I am sure that even middle-grade human-tier soul armaments won’t be an issue for you!”

“Yes master,” Bai Yunfei started to speak, “Then, your disciple

will come by tomorrow....”

But Kou Changkong shook his head, “No need. Starting from tomorrow, you don’t need to come here.”

“Eh?” Bai Yunfei was confused, “But why?”

“You need to master what you’ve just experienced. I’ve taught you all that needs to be taught. From here, work so that you grow more proficient with the art of crafting and increase the chances of making human-tier soul armaments.” Kou Changkong smiled.

“Seek out Song Lin tomorrow and have him appoint you a cave of your own in the Western Point. Practice by yourself, and show me how much you’ve improved every ten days. If you have any question, ask your seniors or come straight to me.”

As it were, Kou Changkong was still the headmaster of the Crafting School. The fact that he spent ten whole days teaching Bai Yunfei without interruption was a statement on just how much importance he placed on Bai Yunfei.

Taking all of this into consideration, Bai Yunfei nodded his head. “Your disciple understands.” He spoke respectfully. “Thank you for your guidance, master. Your disciple will work hard so that I won’t disappoint you in the future!”

“Good. As your master, I will believe in you. However, do not try to advance down the path of crafting too quickly. It isn’t a road meant to be sped through.” Kou Changkong handed a gray-colored ring to Bai Yunfei. “This ring contains plenty of materials. It should last you for some time. There’s also a scroll that details the art of crafting on a more detailed level. Several of the more common synthesis can be found in here, and tidbits on the crafting procedure as well. I’ve several of my own notes written in here, so read it carefully. Understanding it shouldn’t pose too much of a task to you. This cauldron is yours to have as well. I’m sure you’ll use it well with your strength.”

Bai Yunfei's eyes shined brightly as he took in Kou Changkong's words.

“Well then, go ahead back to the Western Point....”

After Bai Yunfei left, Kou Changkong was left alone in the room. He sighed, “Giving him three months to craft an earth-tier soul armament was too much. He can't possibly make one as he is now....”

“Perhaps I should make an announcement to cancel the trial....”

Chapter 216: A 'Defect' In the Upgrade Technique

Nighttime in the courtyard for the disciples.

Seated on top of his bed, Bai Yunfei's hands clutched tightly at the silvery throwing knife he had made.

This was the very first piece of equipment he had crafted. Though it was an incomplete soul armament, but even if he were given the option to switch it out for an earth-tier one, he'd be unwilling.

After plenty of thought, Bai Yunfei took back the knife and replaced it with the space ring given to him by Kou Changkong.

A single scan of its contents had been all that was needed for Bai Yunfei's heart to skip a beat; the interior of the ring was a hundred square meters! All sorts of objects were placed inside, but the amount of vermiculite in there alone was definitely over a thousand individual ores! Even several hundred different types of primal stones were in there....

The contents of this ring was so abundant that if he were to throw it to the outside world, many of the smaller schools would definitely fight each other for it.

But in the Crafting School, it was merely items given to a disciple for 'practice'....

Bai Yunfei wasn't the type of person to care about matters like 'value'. He was only surprised by the amount of it all. With such a large amount of materials, he'd be able to make use of it for a very long time.

Scanning the rest of the inner contents, Bai Yunfei then shook his hand and retrieved a crimson scroll out from the ring.

This was the detailed scroll Kou Changkong had said to have

described the art of crafting on a more technical level.

Storing away the space ring, Bai Yunfei recollected himself and begun to read from the scroll.

Ands so, three hours went by....

Finally, Bai Yunfei closed his eyes as he soaked in the information. With a drawn out sigh, he spoke, “How ridiculous, what I’ve learned so far was only just the tip of the iceberg. There’s at least a thousand different combinations of compounding materials for just human-tier soul armaments alone! I wonder how long it’ll take before I learn everything on this scroll....

“But it’s a good thing master has taught me all these days. ‘One principle learned is another hundred understood’. If I can understand one subject, I will be able to understand the rest.”

After looking through the contents of the scroll once, Bai Yunfei decided to study the introduction first. It was about what he had already learned, but he still spent a single night studying in earnest over the subject.....

.....

On the morning of the second day, Bai Yunfei sought out Song Lin and had a cave arranged for himself. When the two arrived at the caves, Bai Yunfei leapt up to one of the topmost caves to the left while the rest of the students watched him in fear and respect.

“Junior Bai, this cave will be yours from now on. Whatever materials you need in the crafting process can be asked to the juniors down below for help.”

“Alright, thank you very much, senior.”

After Song Lin left, Bai Yunfei was the only one left in the cave. Looking around himself, he started to familiarize himself with the layout of the cave.

It was about four meters in width and several hundred meters

deep. The entrance itself was ten meters in square area, and if one were to travel the small passageway through, a spacious area without anything else in there could be walked to.

Touching the cave, Bai Yunfei took notice that the walls were impeccably hard. It kind of felt like metal to the touch, and the entire cave itself looked extremely solid and hard to crack open.

Walking to the center of the room, Bai Yunfei sat down in a crossed-legged position and took out the space ring given to him by Kou Changkong.

As per usual, a single notification popped up.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Requirement: 46 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up, “Superior!”

This would be the very first time he’d come across a superior piece of accessory. No sooner than a hum later, Bai Yunfei had already upgraded it to +8.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +8

Additional Attribute: +66 Strength

Upgrade Requirement: 54 Soulpoints

Upgrading the ring anymore than now had the risk of failure, so Bai Yunfei decided to stop then and there. He looked at the ring and hummed, “66 Strength at just +8, that means it’ll be in the hundreds almost by +10....I wonder what type of difference there’ll be compared to ‘rare’ accessories? I’ll have to find a time to ask a senior if it’s possible to craft accessory-related equipment....”

Disregarding that topic for now, Bai Yunfei waved his hand so that the crafting cauldron came plopping onto the ground in front of him. A platform was arranged prior to the placement of the cauldron so that it was now at his chest level. This was a very suitable height for crafting.

After the cauldron was taken out, Bai Yunfei's eyebrows flew up as if something suddenly occurred to him. Pressing a hand to the cauldron, he allowed for a notification to pop up.

Equipment Grade: Low Legacy (Unique)

Upgrade Requirement: 86 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei was surprised.

“Uh....what's going on?” Bai Yunfei had a double take at this. Only two pieces of information had surfaced in his head, but nothing else. “Low Legacy with a note for it being ‘special’? It has no attributes, no attack or defense, or even anything else....Is this considered an equipment even? Or is this like how the accessories work, do I have to upgrade it first? This is considered to be a low-grade earth-tier armament. Interesting....”

He upgraded it, but aside from a +1 notification, there was nothing else that popped up.

Bai Yunfei was yet again at a loss for words.

“The upgrade stone was ‘unique’ as well, but even that had an effect even though it couldn't be upgraded.”

But this crafting cauldron was a ‘Low Legacy’ while also being ‘unique’ with no effect. Not even an attribute was to be seen, and neither a change to be seen after being upgraded....

“This is a little....how do I say it....chaotic. Could this be a ‘defect’ in the Upgrade Technique?!”

Bai Yunfei's heart trembled at the thought. If a problem really did crop up in the Upgrade Technique, it would be the very same as a problem to his very own life.

Rushing to take out a few accessories and equipment, Bai Yunfei began to upgrade them one by one.

Having seen no problems, Bai Yunfei let out a sigh in relief, "It's all good. Nothing changed so far, does that mean the crafting cauldron is too unique? But....this has to be a defect in the Upgrade Technique. I didn't come across a lot of equipment before, so this problem never came up. But as soon as I met the upgrade stone and the crafting cauldron, the shortcomings become more apparent....Won't this mean in the future, I'll come across even more problems?"

The more he thought about it, the more worried he got. He depended on the Upgrade Technique far too much, so if even more 'defects' appeared in the Upgrade Technique....

Bai Yunfei shook his head, he didn't want to pursue that line of thought.

"I can't be thinking about that right now. It's pointless no matter how much I think about it. I'll just have to leave it for later...." Bai Yunfei thought. "What I really need to do right now is to study the art of crafting. There's only half a year left, I have to make an earth-tier soul armament no matter what to become a true disciple!!"

Focusing, Bai Yunfei spent the next half hour to calm himself back down so that he could start crafting.

Armed with the experience of yesterday and his reflection from the night after, Bai Yunfei was able to easily make a single three inch throwing knife in half an hour.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Attack: 160

Upgrade Requirement: 46 Soulpoints

He eyed the stats quizzically, “The attack is a little lower than yesterday, where did I go wrong?”

Thinking to practically every detail he could think about, Bai Yunfei decided to take out some more materials and try again.

Another half hour later....

Equipment Grade: Superior
Attack: 182
Upgrade Requirement: 50 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei nodded his head in satisfaction, “Okay, got it. Those two steps weren’t accurate enough, and some other factors need to be considered a little more. Let’s try again....”

He tried every way he could think of so that success and failure happened as often as the other. Without a single break, an entire day went by.

Equipment Grade: Low Rare
Attack: 208
Upgrade Requirement: 60 Soulpoints

Eyes lighting up in excitement, Bai Yunfei took the silver throwing knife into his hands with a happy smile. “I’ve finally made a low rare grade equipment! It’s just barely in the range of a soul armament, but this is still an improvement from before!”

Seeing that it was dark outside, Bai Yunfei thought to himself, “It’s getting late, I’ll stop here then and focus on my training a

little longer. I'll continue crafting tomorrow!"

Chapter 217: Upgrading at Lightning Quick Speed....Isn't Enough!

For a good while, Bai Yunfei had been in a practically berserk craze to train.

Train in the art of crafting, that is.

From when Bai Yunfei first started crafting in that cave to ten days later, Bai Yunfei was already starting to become proficient enough with it to start crafting low-human grade soul armaments.

On twentieth day, his chances of success with mid-human grade soul armaments were rather high.

On the thirtieth day, he was able to make high-human grade soul armaments without a hitch.

This was a rate of growth so fast that should the other students find out about his exponential growth, they'd go mad with jealousy. Even Kou Changkong himself was shocked each and every time he came in to 'inspect' Bai Yunfei's work every ten days.

His growth had even been noticed by the other three elders. They came by to 'observe' the process of how Bai Yunfei would make a human grade soul armament, but once they saw how he was doing it, they all stared oddly before sighing and leaving the cave....

A Soul Sprite making a high-human grade soul armaments was a very normal affair. But for someone like Bai Yunfei—who came to the Crafting School two months ago—he had gone from practically illiterate of the subject to having such a strong degree of proficiency with the Secrets of Firebending and the art of crafting!

His speed was so monumental that for Kou Changkong and the others, they began to compare him with Song Lin. Some started to say he was even better!

This was a development none of them had ever expected to see. Kou Changkong himself had decided to annul the trial in three months then and there. In other words, Kou Changkong would now officially take Bai Yunfei in as a disciple.

Only Bai Yunfei knew the reason why he was improving so frighteningly fast. It wasn't 'talent', as they all said he had.

Instead, it was experience!

It wasn't experience in crafting, or experience in knowing how to manipulate elemental fire.

It was the experience of manipulating his soulforce!

For the art of crafting, the most important aspect was being able to control elemental fire. Should there be a mistake at some point, then the crafting process could end up in failure. To use soulforce to manipulate elemental fire was a difficult task with a minor payoff.

For example, the one who fought Bai Yunfei back then, Chen Huanghua. He became a late-stage Soul Sprite only a year ago, but he still wasn't able to manipulate his soulforce well enough to make a high-human grade soul armament. If given ten attempts, he'd have one or two successes.

But Bai Yunfei had a factor no one else could possibly have, the ability to categorize his soulforce with numerical values!

By use of the Upgrade Technique, he could segment and assign his soulforce using 'units' of measurement. For each 'unit', he could then use it for something else!

Once Bai Yunfei realized this method, he gave up sleep and rest so that he could study this. Now that the fluctuation of soulforce in the process now had a numerical value assigned to just how much soulforce he need, the entire process became a whole lot more clear!

Bai Yunfei himself didn't expect for such a large 'improvement'

to come to him. Previously, the fluctuation of soulforce had been a hazy concept to him. But now, it was extremely straightforward!

And now, the process of crafting was a hundred times more efficient!

This was a secret that only Bai Yunfei could use. In the eyes of an outsider, they could only assume that he had a terrifying amount of ‘talent’.

Even then. Bai Yunfei wasn’t satisfied.

He wasn’t able to create earth grade soul armaments!

Bai Yunfei realized then and there that the ‘trial’ previously given to him by Kou Changkong was an impossible one!

Should he give up?

Of course not!

With all things considered, Kou Changkong’s ‘request’ was a simple matter to accomplish.

He had the Upgrade Technique after all.

All he needed to do was craft a human grade soul armament and then upgrade it to become an earth grade soul armament!

But Bai Yunfei didn’t want to go down such a ‘fraudulent’ method. His rate of growth over the past month had given him a great confidence boost and reconfirmed his own skills. If he could make a high-human grade soul armament within a month, then he could spend the remaining half month to make an earth grade soul armament!

All of the materials given to him by Kou Changkong had been thoroughly used up. Just like his rate of growth in that month, his consumption rate of those materials had been equally fast!

Resolute on being able to craft an earth grade soul armament, Bai Yunfei sought out for Song Lin to have another cache of materials given to him. Under encouragement from Kou Changkong, Song

Lin gave Bai Yunfei materials of uncommon grade so that mid-earth grade soul armaments could be made.

This meant that even if Bai Yunfei made a small mistake somewhere but managed to craft a soul armament still, he'd be able to scratch out an earth grade soul armament. This method was a bit similar to cracking a walnut with a sledgehammer, but it worked.

Of course, this was only just a 'possibility'.

.....

Five days remained until the end of the three month time period.

In Bai Yunfei's own cave on the Western Point, crimson light flooded the entire area and drowned the place in its red light. The air inside the cave was twisted heavily from the high temperatures that was being given off in it.

Seated crossed-leggedly on the ground, Bai Yunfei had the crafting cauldron stacked in front of him. The palm of his right hand pressed against the side of the cauldron so that a rich flow of elemental fire could be transmitted into it. A longsword about a meter long floated in the air as it underwent the refinement process. This phase of the process was reaching its climax, and with just a few more rounds of tempering the blade with fire would bring the process to completion.

"I need more heat!" Like a hawk, Bai Yunfei's honed in on the sword. Droplets of sweat seeped from his head before immediately being evaporated from the high flames surrounding him. Thinking to himself, he thought, "I've only done 564 variants of intensity, that isn't enough! If a soul armament is made, it'll only be a high-human grade soul armament...."

In the scope of materials, the final step of refinement dictated the grade of a soul armament. In this phase, the intensity of the elemental fire had to be constantly changed so that a low-earth

grade soul armament can be made. Even if the materials were capable of making low-earth grade soul armaments, if the change in intensities weren't enough, the grade of the soul armament would drop.

"I'll risk it, one more round!" Gritting his teeth, Bai Yunfei placed his left hand onto the cauldron and pushed out his soulforce into it. The flames in the cauldron swelled up another size and quickly started to flicker and shake.

Just a moment later, Bai Yunfei's face grew white, "Crap, that's too much!"

"Bang!"

Not even an instant later, an explosion erupted from the cauldron followed by a surge of fire.

By the time the flames died down, all that was left in the cauldron was a pile of metallic fragments.

"Dammit, another failure!" Bai Yunfei cursed to himself. Tossing out the fragments from inside the cauldron with a wave of his hand, he deposited it into the corner of the rightmost side of the cave.

A mountain of broken weapon fragments was already piled up from in large numbers—a tragic sight to behold.

Bai Yunfei studied the cauldron with an dejected expression for a while before he bit his lips, "Again!"

With another wave of his right hand, another batch of materials flew into his cauldron; among this batch were three clumps of vermiculite ore the size of a washbasin almost.

For the sake of producing a high quality soul armament, Bai Yunfei would no longer be miserly with his materials!

Pushing his soulforce into the cauldron to liquefy and refine the materials, Bai Yunfei watched as the flames roared to life inside the

cauldron with a crackling sound. A meter-long machete mold took shape at the bottom of the cauldron for the liquated materials to take form in along with the supplementary materials. In the mold, the flames would slowly refine them.

The compoundment phase took two hours this time. It was only when the supplementary materials was successfully infused into the main materials that Bai Yunfei proceeded into the next phase of refinement....

A clear sound suddenly made itself known in the caves.

“Heehee, brother strawhat, I’ve found you!!”

The sudden voice had given Bai Yunfei such a fright that the flames in the cauldron flared up and energy began to billow outwards.

Cold sweat appeared on Bai Yunfei’s forehead; this was an omen that the cauldron was about to explode. An explosion like this was a surefire sign of failure. Not only would the entire crafting process go to waste, there was a very real chance of danger happening to the crafter themselves.

Bai Yunfei wasn’t all too experienced with crafting so the dangers wouldn’t be too bad, but something bad would still happen nonetheless.

For an example of one of these bad events, please think back to what happened to Chen Huanghua prior to his arrival.

Pressing hard with both palms, Bai Yunfei forced the soulforce in the cauldron to force down the elemental fire from spilling out everywhere. The flames gradually began to die down before finally petering out. With a final snapping sound, the soul armament in the cauldron shattered into pieces.

“Agh....” Bai Yunfei groaned to himself. Dispersing the remaining flames in the cauldron, he dissipated the elemental fire around him and then turned his head to speak, “Junior Dai Dai,

what brings you here?”

The person that came to disturb him was none other than the princess of the Crafting School, Huangfu Rui.

In her hands was the very same Xiao Rourou. She stood a small distance away from Bai Yunfei with a happy smile on her face, “Heehee. How silly are you to be so distracted, brother strawhat? Even if it’s super noisy, Dai Dai can focus completely on crafting!”

“....” A frown was itching to make its way onto Bai Yunfei’s lips as if he was hoping to say, “How could I even compare to a genius like you?”.

Instead, he stared somberly at Huangfu Rui, “What brought you here today, junior?”

Chapter 218: A Brief Break

“I want to play with you.”

Her head tilted to her side as she stared innocently at him. “You only played with me for a half day last time. But then you never came to see Dai Dai again! The kite you made broke already, can you make me another one?”

“What? It broke? How?” Bai Yunfei started. For the sake of honoring his promise, he went to play with Dai Dai and helped make her a goldfish-shaped kite to play with. It had been made with high-quality paper that was pliable, but strong; and even if it were to get wet, it wouldn’t break so easily.

Huangfu Rui’s face twisted together, “It was hit by lightning the afternoon before yesterday....”

Black lines etched itself onto Bai Yunfei’s face—“There was a thunderstorm on that day and you were still flying a kite?!”

“Uh....were you hurt?” Bai Yunfei just had to ask.

Baffled, the girl responded, “Nope. But I...I felt numb for a bit. The kite was completely broken though.....”

“.....”

“Brother strawhat, play with me again! Can we fly another kite? Please?” Huangfu Rui’s large eyes stared up at Bai Yunfei to plead with him as if she were a spoiled child.

“Junior,” Bai Yunfei started to speak with scrunched eyebrows, “I’m very busy right now. I have to craft a soul armament very soon, so I....”

Huangfu Rui pouted, “Hmph! Senior Yun was right! Brother strawhat only knows how to craft! Senior Yun said that this wasn’t right. She said that you have to take a break every so often, or else you’ll get even worse! That’s why she came with me today to play

with you.”

Bai Yunfei’s eyebrow flew up at that, “Senior Yun...Xinyun’s here as well?”

“Dai Dai, I told you to not go straight in! Why must you run in without even a word?” At that moment, a warm voice called out from the entrance of the cave. A figure in white soon entered the cave, revealing itself to be Tang Xinyun.

“Xinyun, what brings you here as well...?” Bai Yunfei was almost afraid to ask. The last time he met Huangfu Rui, Tang Xinyun had been right next to her. The two of them got along just fine, but for what reason would she have to call the newcomer ‘senior’ Yun?

Was it because Tang Xinyun had also a partner as cute as ‘Xiao Baibai’??

“Xiao Rui is always talking about you and how she loves the toys you made for her incessantly. I couldn’t convince her not to come, so I decided to accompany her here to find you.” Tang Xinyun greeted Bai Yunfei with a smile. A small dimple was just barely noticeable on the left side of her face.

Looking at the pile of broken soul armament fragments in the corner of the cave, her eyebrows knitted together, “Yunfei, did you spend the past several days crafting all of this in the cave?”

Now that both Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun met again in the Crafting School, they saw each other as good friends rather than acquaintances. They were far more familiar with one another, and no longer did they regard each other at an arm’s length away.

Tang Xinyun had joked that Bai Yunfei should call her ‘senior’, and Bai Yunfei had naturally disagreed to do so.

Bai Yunfei sighed, “I just have to. I’ve only five days left until the third month. If I don’t make an earth grade soul armament....”

“I said it before, so I’ll say it again. You don’t need to work so hard like this.” Tang Xinyun spoke with exasperation. “I heard

master say that the headmaster has already decided to annul the trial and take you in as a disciple without any conditions. Why are you trying so hard still then?”

Bai Yunfei shook his head, “Every single student of the school is watching me. I need to prove my strength and talent that I belong as a disciple!”

He paused here to look at the cauldron behind him. “I feel like I’m at a bottleneck of some sort. Who knows....”

“Yunfei, you’re far too dedicated to this.” Tang Xinyun sighed. “I’m sure the headmaster has told you already, the path of crafting isn’t something that can be rushed head-on. If you want to craft an earth grade soul armament, then let me ask you, have you succeeded in making soul armaments today?”

“I....” It was then Bai Yunfei realized the truth behind what she was saying. He had been so focused on crafting an earth grade soul armament, he didn’t even realize that out of dozens of attempts, not a single one of them had succeeded!

Tang Xinyun laughed in response, “Overexertion leads to an improper mindset when crafting. It’s a good thing Xiao Rui found you when she did.

“In my opinion, you should play with her today and take your mind off things for now. The next time you try crafting, it’ll be a lot easier.”

“Yea yea! Mom only lets me craft three soul armaments a day! She said that anymore would be pointless.” Huangfu Rui nodded from the side.

“Brother strawhat, come play with me! Dai Dai is amazing, you know. I can shrink a lot of materials and make them even stronger!”

He was silent this time. What Tang Xinyun said to him made sense; perhaps it would actually be best if he took a break and wind

down. Recollecting the cauldron, Bai Yunfei smiled. “Alright, then I’ll play with junior Rui for a while. Didn’t you want a kite? I’ll make you an even bigger kite in the shape of a butterfly this time...”

Huangfu Rui was ecstatic. “Really?! Okay! Yes! Make it now then! We can fly it up above the hills!”

.....

The northern grasslands of the Eastern Point was already a lush area of jade-green since it was already the second month of the year. All of the nearby trees were filled with vivid leaves and life was springing up from every area.

Huangfu Rui was running around the place with the kite in hand and a delightful scream coming from her lips. Up above, a giant butterfly kite was ‘flapping’ its wings as it flew through the air. The quickshade bird followed the kite with a flap of its wings every so often, as if to say, “I’m a kite too!”

As for the small pig named Xiao Rourou, it chased after Huangfu Rui right behind with a snort and a grunt every so often.

Bai Yunfei just had to sweatdrop at the sight.

The two of them were both fifth-tier soulbeasts, how could they be reduced to such simple pets that loved to play?

Right by his side, Tang Xinyun smiled as she watched Huangfu Rui play to her heart's content.

Looking to her, Bai Yunfei asked, “Hey, Xinyun, have you already started learning the art of crafting?”

“It’s a little early for that. I’ve only just become a Soul Sprite not too long ago; so I can’t even control the elemental fire yet.” Tang Xinyun shook her head.

“I’m currently trying to train in the Secrets of Firebending still. Why must you compare me to you? By the first month, you’ve

mastered the Secrets of Firebending, and by the second month, you're able to craft human grade soul armaments now. And yet you're still throwing yourself at trying to make an earth grade soul armament. Don't you know most of the students already see you as a god or something? I know there's plenty of junior sisters on the Eastern Point that are getting quite curious about you."

"Ah? Is that so?" Bai Yunfei scratched his head in embarrassment, "How do the other students even know about my progress anyways?"

"I think a junior named Zhang Sanxian started the rumors." She smiled. "He's said to be the 'Bai Xiaosheng' of the Crafting School. He's also known as a chatterbox. All of the rumors are from the 'secret information' he has, haha..."

TL Note: Bai Xiaosheng is a fictional character by Wuxia novelist Gu Long. He was said to have started a list of the best fighters and weapons in the Wulin.

Bai Yunfei was speechless. Zhang Sanxian was the very first person he had met from the Crafting School on friendly terms while also being of the same Western Point as him. The only difference was that Zhang Sanxian was situated on the western side of the courtyard--a respectively far distance away from Bai Yunfei. Combined with how busy Bai Yunfei was in his training, the two rarely met with one another. The information he had on Bai Yunfei surely had to be supplemented by what Bai Yunfei's neighbor, Si Kongxian, knew.

As expected from the two 'Xians', they would be good friends with one another.

Watching the quickshade bird fly across the skies, Bai Yunfei spoke, "Hey, Xinyun, why do I feel as if Xiao Bai's got...."

"Got a little stronger?" Tang Xinyun smiled. "That's because it did. Xiao Bai's already become a middle-stage fifth-tier soulbeast."

“That fast?” Bai Yunfei was surprised.

Tang Xinyun nodded. “It was severely hurt when we saved it a long time ago. After its wounds healed after the escape from the beast tamers in Gaoyi City, its wounds were fully healed by the time we got to the Crafting School. When I became a Soul Sprite, Xiao Bai gained some power from the soul contract it had with me. The remaining wounds were healed and it became stronger.”

“Ah?” Bai Yunfei uttered, “A soul contract had a use like that?”

“Yes. Soul contracts are wondrously magical. Not only did it allow for Xiao Bai and I to share our thoughts, it synchronized our soulforce together in a kind of symbiotic way.” She nodded, “This is the unique effect of a soul contract. That’s why so many soul cultivators desperately wish to make a soul contract with a soulbeast.”

Bai Yunfei was astounded, “How great....I wish I had a soulbeast partner as well....”

But then he tilted his head to look down at the small ball-shaped white pig chasing happily after Huangfu Rui, “But I wouldn’t want a soulbeast like that one....”

Tang Xinyun laughed, “Haha, I heard master say that a student has to become a Soul Exalt before they’re allowed to travel to the Soulbeast Forest to form a soul contract with a soulbeast. Those who came to the school with a soulbeast partner like me are already non-existent almost...”

“A....A Soul Exalt?!” Speechless, Bai Yunfei responded, “Isn’t that asking just a little too much?! Just how long would a person have to wait...?”

Chapter 219: Skipping a Stage to Refine by Compression!

The two continued to chat for some time before Huangfu Rui finally came trotting back to them after taking down the kite.

“Brother strawhat, sister Yun, do you want to eat barbecue?”

“Barbeque?” Bai Yunfei raised an eyebrow.

Huangfu Rui nodded, “Yea! Let me tell you something. The barbecue Dai Dai makes is the best! Xiao Rourou loves eating it.”

Bai Yunfei reeled backward in shock. Almost losing his step, he looked at the nearby red pig, “It....it eats meat?!”

“Yea!” Huangfu Rui responded. “Xiao Rourou eats a lot, even more than Dai Dai does!”

This time, Bai Yunfei was seriously at a loss for words. “It eats meat! How wrong is that?! You’re a pig for heavens sakes....”

Tang Xinyun realized what Bai Yunfei was thinking about and spoke softly to him, “Yunfei, Xiao Rourou is a late-stage fifth-tier soulbeast, should you really be comparing it to....one of those?”

“Oh!” A lightbulb popped into his head, “How could I forget?! I can’t be so easily cheated by a soulbeast’s physical appearance!”

As if understanding what Bai Yunfei was thinking about, the red magiboar gave a snort and cracked open its maw so that its pearly-white teeth shined at Bai Yunfei....

“I don’t have the things to make barbecue....” Bai Yunfei shook his hands in front of him as if to indicate he had nothing to give. There was plenty of things to pick up on his travels, but the stuff for barbecue was not one of them.

“I do, I do!”

No sooner did Huangfu Rui give an enthusiastic response did she

pull out the small pink pouch by her side. Sticking her hand into it, she groped around before finally pulling out a two-meter long grill for barbecue in a flash of red light.

“And then....some purple charcoal, it makes the barbecue taste even better!” She pulled out a clump of charcoal the color of purple right afterward.

“And then a table.” In the third flash of red light, a table with several stools was brought out in front of them.

“And! And some deer meat, and a five-finned fish, and a....” One after another, Huangfu Rui ‘pulled’ out platters of meat and fish dishes and placed them onto the table.

“.....”

Bai Yunfei was gobsmacked. “Are you Doraemon?!”

“Are...are you Doraemon or something?!” Bai Yunfei blurted out by accident.

“And that’s it!” Huangfu Rui had only just dusted off her hands after plating the last dish onto the table before turning to Bai Yunfei, “Eh? Brother strawhat, what did you say just now? Doraemon? What’s that?”

“Er, it’s nothing...” Bai Yunfei shook his head. “Junior Rui, this bag of yours....”

Tang Xinyun spoke up to answer Bai Yunfei first. “It’s a space pouch, they’re similar to a space ring. I heard that the previous headmaster made it for Xiao Rui personally.” She smiled.

“The previous headmaster? Headmaster Zi Jin?”

“That’s right! Uncle Zi is so nice to me! Dai Dai wanted to be able to store things in here, so he helped make me a spatial soul armament!” Huangfu Rui slapped the pouch merrily as she explained the backstory.

“Headmaster Zi Jin is....” Bai Yunfei tilted his head slightly

before realizing something.

“Oh, how does one even make a spatial soul armament?” He asked.

But Tang Xinyun shook her head cluelessly, telling Bai Yunfei that he asked the wrong person.

But then Huangfu Rui suddenly shot her hand up into the air, “I know, I know!” She piped up.

“Wha? You know?”

“I do!” Huangfu Rui took on the posture of a teacher, “A person has to understand the laws of space in order to craft a spatial soul armament. Otherwise, one has to be a soul cultivator with an affinity for the very rare space element. You have to be a Soul King to be able to start understanding the laws of space...”

“The space element and Soul King...” Bai Yunfei shook his head sadly. As he was now, there was no point in thinking about the two.

.....

Afterward, Huangfu Rui made sure to show Bai Yunfei some of her best techniques in the art of barbecue. Needless to say, the barbecue was great, and Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun were able to eat plenty.

As for the red magiboar, it was able to eat enough meat for three people--no, three boars. Even the quickshade bird was only able to peck at a single slab of deer meat.

Both of which let Bai Yunfei come to a conclusion: One can't use the 'secular' standards to come and try to understand the beings known as soulbeasts....

.....

Later that night in his cave.

Bai Yunfei felt much better after spending half the day in rest.

When he started to craft again, a success popped up straight away.

Equipment Grade: High Rare

Attack: 451

Upgrade Requirement: 77 Soulpoints

Taking a look at the silver shortsword in his hand, Bai Yunfei quirked an eyebrow, “This must be what they mean by being in tip-top shape when crafting. I’ve only just started and I was able to make a high-human grade soul armament. An earth grade isn’t....too far away then....”

A dagger was made another three hours later, but this one was only 435 in attack; it was weaker than the first attempt.

“I still can’t! I’m lacking in something still! I need to make an earth grade soul armament! Just one....” Bai Yunfei shook his head in disappointment and placed the dagger away into his space ring.

If Chen Huanghua were to find out that Bai Yunfei was able to make two high-human grade soul armaments in a row, he’d be filled with resentment and so much jealousy that he’d break a wall with his head in shame.

“Junior Rui said that she could compress materials to their limits this afternoon. She said that this way, its power would be magnified....I remember there was a method like that said in the art of crafting....” Bai Yunfei suddenly thought back to one of the things Huangfu Rui had let slip from her mouth earlier today. Thinking about it, he flipped his hand so that the manual for crafting would appear and started to flip through it.

A moment later, Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up, “Got it! Refinement via compression!”

Scanning through the text, Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows knitted together after he finished reading, “This is a method only a Soul

Ancestor should try to attempt....ugh!!”

But then he thought about the idea again and muttered, “But still. This method doesn’t look too hard. Maybe....just maybe I can do it? The only difference is how strong the compressions have to be. I might not get it to perfection, but I might just be able to make an earth grade soul armament this way....”

“Should I try it out?” Bai Yunfei hesitated, the scroll still waiting in his hand.

“.....”

“Who cares! Nothing ventured nothing gained! If I fail, I’m only just going to lose materials, that’s all!” Bai Yunfei spoke in a way similar to what a spendthrift might say. No longer hesitating, he started to read on the subject and started to try and learn the methodology behind it.

In concept, the method wasn’t complicated. It was only just a matter of surrounding the materials in fire before compressing the materials over and over again to refine it. The better quality the materials were the more force that was required to compress it. That’s how the soul armament got stronger.

Of course, one had to make sure that the materials being compressed didn’t exceed their limits. Any more and the materials would be crushed beyond use, subsequently turning them into waste.

About an hour afterwards, Bai Yunfei placed down the scroll and stored it back into his space ring. “All I have left are some high quality vermiculite ores, that should be enough. I have to make an earth grade soul armament by tonight!”

Placing his right hand onto the cauldron once more, Bai Yunfei sent some soulforce out. Since he was wearing the Ardent Sun Glove on his hand, the glove glowed bright red in color. A small flame almost similar to the sun in brightness appeared right above

his palm--Bai Yunfei was using the elemental fire from the glove to supplement the strength of the fire.

“Bang!”

A fire roared to life within the cauldron and swiftly spread out so that the flames covered the entire cauldron in its light.

With a wave of his left hand, five pieces of vermiculite ore were deposited into the cauldron. In a flash, they were liquated and turned into a small blob of pure essence surrounded by fire. Honing his eyes onto it, Bai Yunfei forced a small vortex to appear in front of him. As it spun around the essence, the vortex grew smaller in size along with the essence.

Soon enough, a small glob of essence about the size of his fist took form within the vortex. As it shined bright red in color, Bai Yunfei glared even harder at it, “Not enough!”

Following another wave of his left hand, a few more clumps of vermiculite ore were added into the cauldron....

Bai Yunfei’s eyes were practically boring holes into the essence in the cauldron, and his mind was completely engrossed in this very action alone. His soulforce continued to pulsate outwards so as to continue compressing and refining the materials.

“Still not enough!”

A few more vermiculite ores were thrown in....

The number of materials he was using now usually enough to make a fifty-kilogram hammer, a giant tower shield, or any other heavy-type soul armament. But under Bai Yunfei’s compression, the materials were becoming smaller than a ball!

Another two hours later, Bai Yunfei’s eyes were already bloodshot from the amount of focus he had going on. His soulforce was already at a peak in what he could throw out, and the fire in the cauldron was already dancing so wildly that the interior of the cauldron was impossible to see in.

“Pow!”

An explosion came out from the cauldron, shattering the silence that had been present in the cave.

Straight away, Bai Yunfei grew shocked!

“Crap, I lost control!!”

Chapter 220: Losing Control

A furious wave of energy exploded forth from the cauldron, filling the entire cave almost instantly. As the heat wave spread across the area, the hot winds blew at Bai Yunfei's clothes so that they rippled back and forth while the temperature in the cave swelled up abruptly!

Up until now, the vermiculite ore that had been reduced to essence within the flames had been docile as it was being compressed. But then out of the blue, it began to churn and billow outwards as if trying to contest with the flames that were constricting it!

Stern as he regarded the situation, Bai Yunfei's right hand continued to expel soulforce while his left hand threw in some supplementary materials into the cauldron.

Each time a supplementary material was added to the mixture with the main ones, the explosive energy slowly started to ease up.

"Whew...." Bai Yunfei let out a sigh in relief before suddenly realizing the situation with a start.

"Damn! This won't do!"

The essence had only been calm for two seconds before it exploded outwards again!

With a wave of his left hand again, a large amount of supplementary materials were thrown into the cauldron again. Like last time, the energy was only abated for just a moment.

Once more, the energy began to splash outwards of the cave and bring it to a scorching boil. But only Bai Yunfei's back was thoroughly drenched with sweat.

It was all too clear to him that the amount of vermiculite ore he had been compressing for the past few hours contained a tremendous amount of power. Should that power be let loose, then

the resulting explosion would without a doubt be far stronger than what a normal cauldron explosion would be!!

“I can’t let it explode! I gotta force it back down!”

A mental howl echoed in Bai Yunfei’s head as the Ardent Sun Glove on his right hand and the Flameblade Bracer on his right arm both lit up with an eye-piercing light. The fire in the cauldron swelled up again, but when Bai Yunfei’s left hand tossed in even more supplementary materials, the mixture was forced back down to a near manageable degree.

A few scant minutes later when Bai Yunfei’s hand down to pick up some supplementary materials again, Bai Yunfei realized that there was none left in his space ring! But this realization only came about after he picked up and threw in some vermiculite ore and primal stones instead of the supplementary materials!

But when nothing happened when the vermiculite and primal stones were thrown into the fire, Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up, “They did something!”

Somehow, the addition of the two had decreased the hysterical energy in the cauldron!

Without needing to be told, Bai Yunfei began to throw in several clumps of golden ore into the cauldron.

The furious energy gave pause here, giving Bai Yunfei a chance to push his soulforce into it. Bending to his control, the elemental fire began to condense and spin rapidly in the cauldron so as to force the energy that was threatening to leak out to be condensed once more.

But....

“Pow!”

Just like the first time, the materials that were being condensed exploded out once more. If the elemental fire covering the materials were like a balloon of air, then something had popped

the balloon open for the energy inside to come bursting out.

Not even hesitating in the slightest, Bai Yunfei tossed in even more vermiculite and primal stones. It didn't even matter how big their rarity was, all that mattered was regaining the control over the situation....

But with this rapid usage of his remaining materials, it didn't take long for his supply to go completely bare....

So when the energy within the cauldron began to leak out again, it leaked out in an energy far stronger than before!!

In a way, this situation was similar to a pot of boiling water. In order to prevent the water from boiling for too long, cool water must be added to stabilize the temperature and stop the water from boiling. But sooner or later, the cool water that was added will be set to boil again, leaving no other choice but to add even more water. Lather, rinse, repeat.

Sooner or later, however, there would be no stopping the boiling or even a point in adding water. Not only was the water in the pot completely boiled, the pot itself would be melted!

“Dammit! Stop, please! I can't control this!” Bai Yunfei grew panicked and his face contorted in anxiety. In his moment of desperation, his left hand flew to toss in a few staff-shaped soul armaments he made the days before into the cauldron.

“Wha—It worked!!” Bai Yunfei's face lit up with excitement upon realizing that the addition of these soul armaments weakened the flow of energy somewhat. Struggling to grasp at what was essentially the life-saving rope thrown to him, Bai Yunfei tossed in a few more equipment.

Normal equipment, upgraded equipment, incomplete soul armament, and soul armaments, they would all be tossed into the cauldron without discrimination.

The heart of the congregation of energy felt like a bottomless

black hole. So many pieces of equipment were being tossed into it, but it had only led to the energy growing slightly bigger while also weakening in its wild and chaotic flow.

But there would be a discovery that Bai Yunfei would soon find out about following this strange change in development....

If things were to go on like this, when Bai Yunfei ran out of equipment, then his cave, and quite possibly the entire cliff would not be able to handle the explosion....

“Stop! Stop! Stop!!!!” Bai Yunfei roared out loud to his cauldron while tossing in even more equipment. At the same time, he let out a muffled whimper in his head, “My equipment!!”

The situation in front of him was no longer a situation he could control. Even if he wanted to turn face and run, he couldn’t! If the energy in the cauldron didn’t come to a stop, he wouldn’t be able to either!

One by one, the equipment in his space ring grew smaller and smaller before the ring itself became empty of non-upgraded equipment....

When his left hand tossed in an upgraded piece of equipment, Bai Yunfei’s eyes widened as soon as the article left his hand and into the cauldron!

Rusty-red in color and chipped in a multitude of places, this item sheened red in color—it was the +13 brick!

“No!!” Bai Yunfei yelped. His right hand stretched out towards the cauldron; he had to take back that brick!

It had been an unconscious stream of actions that led to the brick being thrown into the cauldron. But to Bai Yunfei, this brick was extremely important, no matter if it was in its effects or overall sentiments!

By the time his hand caught up to the brick, it was already about to touch the still rippling red liquid inside the cauldron!

According to reason, this red liquid would be about the same type of consistency and temperature as molten iron or lava.

But when Bai Yunfei’s hand touched the insides, he felt the polar opposite—it was cold!

There wasn’t any time for Bai Yunfei to pull out the brick, but when his hand made contact with it, a notification immediately popped up inside Bai Yunfei’s head, rendering him speechless...

Equipment Grade: Ordinary

Upgrade Level: +13

Attack: 9

Additional Attack: 132

+10 Additional Effect: Attacks have a 1% chance of confusing the target for a maximum of 3 seconds.

(When attacking the head, the chance of confusing increases to 5%).

+12 Additional Effect: Attacks have an 8% chance of stunning the target for a maximum of 5 seconds.

(When attacking the head, the chance of stunning increases to 15%).

+13 Additional Effect: Attacks have a 30% chance of hurling the target through the air.

Upgrade Requirement: 50 Soulpoints

—This was the stats for the +13 brick, but what really made him speechless was the following notification.

Equipment Grade: Middle Regalia

Attack: 4763

Upgrade Requirement: 260 Soulpoints

“.....”

His mind went blank and his body went rigid from his shock. Not a single peep came out from Bai Yunfei’s mouth before yet another notification arose in his mind.

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia
Attack: 2367
Upgrade Requirement: 140 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Middle Regalia
Attack: 3958
Upgrade Requirement: 230 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Middle
Regalia Attack: 4319
Upgrade Requirement: 240 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia
Attack...

“.....”

In the time it took for two short breaths of air, the number of notifications that popped up in his head had been mind boggling!

In the next moment....

In the next moment, an unbelievably impetuous amount of energy rippled through the air, jolting Bai Yunfei awake!

Without a constant flow of soul armaments to restrain the energy, the elemental fire flew out of control while Bai Yunfei was distracted. Like a feral horse let loose, the ‘things’ inside the flame began to knock and thrash about in the cauldron. From how it flickered and pulsated, the cauldron looked as if there was a mini universe about to explode inside!

This dazzling red light had already overshadowed the elemental fire that Bai Yunfei had condensed in the cauldron along with his entire being. Even the cave itself was flooded with light.

There was nothing else Bai Yunfei could do now. He was a cornered dog with no way to move and only one action left for him to make....

A spark of light clicked in Bai Yunfei’s head. With all the haste he could manage, he shouted out loud,

“UPGRADE!!”

Chapter 221: Confusion

A spark of light clicked in Bai Yunfei’s head. With all the haste he could manage, he shouted out loud,

“UPGRADE!!”

.....

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Middle Regalia
Upgrade Level: +1
Attack: 3389
Additional Attack: 98
Upgrade Requirement: 210 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei wasn’t too sure if it was just an illusion, but when he managed to pull off an upgrade, the oppressing aura around him stopped for just that one moment!

Even if it wasn’t an illusion, Bai Yunfei was determined to seize this opportunity. If he was drowning in a pool of water, upgrading would be the life-saving piece of reed for him to grab hold of.

Without hesitation, he shouted out again, “Upgrade!”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Middle Regalia
Upgrade Level: +2
Atta—

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia
Attack: 2873
Upgrade Requirement: 190 Soulpoints

As sudden as could be, another notification popped up before the first one could even fully reveal its stats!

Though shocked, Bai Yunfei gave no time to think about it and thought, “Upgrade!”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia
Upgrade Level: +1
Attack: 2873
Additional Attack: 90
Upgrade Requi—

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia
Attack: 2649
Upgrade Requirement: 160 Soulpoints

Just like before, another notification had interrupted the first one.

But when he succeeded in upgrading, Bai Yunfei could feel the pressure around him grow noticeably lighter.

“It really worked!” Bai Yunfei was astonished and relieved. He had no idea what in the world was going on, but his mind had already come to a conclusion.

“Upgrade!” He thought next.

Upgrade Successful

“.....”

Just like how Bai Yunfei had been throwing in materials and equipment when he was crafting, Bai Yunfei was now ‘mechanically’ upgrading each equipment he had left.

As it were, the situation at hand was completely far beyond what he could comprehend. He couldn’t even begin to imagine just how things could develop to such a point. If his hand were to pull out a moment earlier, an injury from the cauldron would’ve been for certain. Bai Yunfei knew that if the ‘thing’ inside the cauldron exploded, death would’ve been the least of his worries....

There was no time for regrets or even second thoughts. All he could do now was to concentrate completely on upgrading in hopes of stabilizing whatever it was that needed to be stabilized. It would be even better for someone to notice what was going on so that the elders could hopefully come over and help him....

The ‘substance’ his right hand was touching was about the size of a small soccer ball by this point. Thanks to his constant upgrading, it didn’t take long for a stern look to grow on his face—he was running out of soulforce!

Notifications popped up in his head one after another so often that it was no longer shocking to Bai Yunfei. Each equipment wavered in between low regalia to middle regalia before, but now, all sorts of equipment ranging from superior to regalia could be had. Neither pattern nor rest could be found here!

Some of the notifications that’d appear would often be the stats of an equipment after it was upgraded. Sometimes, some would appear as soon as it was upgraded, and other times, notifications would pop up right before another equipment was upgraded!

It was a chaotic mess of time for Bai Yunfei....

That wasn’t the only mess, however. Bai Yunfei’s thoughts, the energy in the cave, and even the Upgrade Technique. Everything

was in disarray....

.....

The definite time had been lost to Bai Yunfei by the time his soulforce ran out and his eyes had gone bloodshot from exertion when he ended the last upgrade with a gasping breath.

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

The last string of notification had been for a +10 dagger. It had failed to upgrade, but the ‘sphere’ above the cauldron failed to change in situation. A second notification popped up in Bai Yunfei’s head after that.

Equipment Grade: High Rare
Attack: 461
Upgrade Requirement: 77 Soulpoints

By now, Bai Yunfei’s mind was completely hazy with fatigue. Withdrawing the stockpiled 300 soulpoints in his space ring, Bai Yunfei clenched his teeth, “Upgrade!”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade:

The notification continued to pop up in Bai Yunfei’s head one after another. Not even a while later, Bai Yunfei was on the verge

of collapsing to the ground. If he were to try and upgrade an item that needed over a hundred soulforce, then he would be completely devoid of any soulforce.

It was at this time that Bai Yunfei could feel an item fall straight onto his hand.

A notification popped up then, but the stats of this item caused him to go blank in the face.

Equipment Grade: Normal

Upgrade Level: +13

Attack: 9

Additional Attack: 132

+10 Additional Effect:

“.....”

It was the damned +13 brick!

Bai Yunfei’s earlier attempt to ‘save’ the brick had resulted in this situation from happening. But now it had finally ‘returned’ to his hand.

But....

Bai Yunfei didn’t feel a sliver of ‘joy’ about this. In fact, he didn’t even feel like taking the brick out at all.

The chaotic energy had decided to make a ‘counterattack’ whilst Bai Yunfei was in his moment of stupor, prompting him to sigh and say, “Upgr—”

Not even the final part of the word could be stated when something happened out of the blue!

A wave of attraction suddenly came from the ‘thing’ and made contact with Bai Yunfei before he could even react. As soon as it touched his right hand, the very last sliver of soulforce was

usurped straight from it!

Bai Yunfei's heart stopped in that one brief moment out of fright. He could feel his soulforce being practically ripped from his body, and the light-headed sensation that came prior to knocking out was knocking at his head. In the moment he began to lose consciousness, two final words made its way into Bai Yunfei's head....

“It's over!!”

It had felt as if the elemental fire all over the cave had stopped in that one moment. The resplendent red light that was shining out above the cauldron was starting to expand and contract over and over again as if it were a tidal wave in a surging storm. Splashing outwards like a red wave, the fire was then immediately ‘sucked’ into the cauldron!

It was roughly at the same time when Bai Yunfei fell to the ground. He was unconscious. But the red light continued to flood the cave around him, ultimately covering up Bai Yunfei as well.

“Boom!!”

A loud explosion rocked the area and resonated to even the outside of the caves. Startled, all of the students of the Crafting School looked up towards the dark skies. They were just in time to see a bright fiery sun come shining out from the Western Point with a light that could illuminate the surrounding hundred kilometers!

The light from the sun persisted for a few seconds before it started to ebb in intensity. Gradually, the center of the sun was exposed, revealing the cliff where the crafting caves were.

But!

All that was left was half of the cliff side!

The very topmost part of the cliffs was completely and utterly gone from sight!

.....

Bai Yunfei had been at ground zero of the explosion. He was out cold from where he laid on top of the ruined cliff side, but it didn't quite seem as if the explosion had affected him. There wasn't even a scratch to be seen on him!

There was an even bigger oddity to be seen there. About a meter in front of him following the explosion, a liquid sphere the size of a soccer ball floated in the air!

At its conception, 'it' had been burning bright with a crimson light. But now, there was a different color mixed in. As 'it' continued to pulsate and billow over itself, the other colors could be just barely seen in the red.

Right underneath 'it' was a flame about the size of a fist. It danced and flickered delicately as if it would go out at any second. But at the same time, it felt as if a boundless amount of energy was contained in it.

Essence fireseed!!

Somehow, Bai Yunfei's essence fireseed had detached from his body!!

There was yet another peculiarity to the place. A few meters all around Bai Yunfei, there was a transparent air bubble that encapsulated him inside. It looked completely disharmonious with the air around it, and anyone that looked at it would feel as if this air bubble didn't belong in this world.

Bai Yunfei, the essence fireseed, and the storming 'sphere' were all completely surrounded by this air bubble. From the outside, there as a ripple that moved along the three objects, as if it were scanning the three.

Each time a ripple glossed over it, the essence fireseed would give a slight jump.

The sphere itself would try to jump and roar to life, but the air

bubble would ‘restrain’ it.

This transparent ‘entity’ was seen once before—it first showed up when Bai Yunfei obtained the Equipment Upgrade Technique.

It was called the planar laws!!

If the planar laws were showing up yet again, what new change would it be bringing this time?

Chapter 222: Soul Binding!

As Bai Yunfei's conscious started to clear, he began to 'wake' up.

When he 'opened' his eyes, the sight that came to greet them startled Bai Yunfei.

A crimson glow flooded the area with its red luster. Along with the light, elemental fire danced wildly all around as if taking up all the oxygen to leave none behind to breathe in.

But what surprised Bai Yunfei the most was the hundreds of weapons 'floating' all around the place!

His very first instinct was to back away.

But even when the thought occurred to him, a horrifying discovery was met.

He had no 'body'!

Calming himself down as swiftly as he could, Bai Yunfei 'looked' around the place with a mind racing in thought.

"This feeling's pretty familiar....soul sense....or just my own thoughts!

"I....I was crafting a soul armament when I lost control. After that....I used everything I could, but I still ran out of soulforce.

"But what happened after that?

"And what's going on right now? How are my thoughts coming to this place?

"Hold on....the things around me...." Bai Yunfei's eyes observed the floating weapons all around him.

"Equipment! These are the equipment I threw into the cauldron!

"But how! How did this happen? Did my soulsense get sucked into the crafting cauldron?! This....this doesn't feel right though. Not only that, my entire spirit feels like it's here too!"

This situation baffled Bai Yunfei. He could make neither heads nor tails of what was going on, or how this was happening to begin with. Even when he tried to feel his way around the place, he got no reaction from his senses.

“Is....is my ‘body’ gone already?!” Having no answers for this situation, Bai Yunfei’s hairs stood at their ends when this horrifying thought came to his mind.

But after some time went by, Bai Yunfei came to the startling realization that there was indeed one sensation he was suddenly feeling.

Fatigue!

His consciousness was slowly growing faint!

This was a monumental distinction. Now that he could guess that his body was gone, Bai Yunfei knew that should his consciousness sink any further, his very person could very well be the next thing to disappear....

Subconsciously, Bai Yunfei began to go through the process of waking himself up by using his soulforce as was taught in The Arte of Training the Soul.

“It works!!”

Much to his joy, the teachings of the manual worked even in here!

Throwing out every other thought in his head, Bai Yunfei started to train in this strange place.

A strange wind was starting to take form in this crimson-red space. Stirring up the elemental fire around the area, the winds began to focus it into one ‘focal’ point. The winds picked up in speed with such speed that the elemental fire became a vortex that swirled and picked up in might as it condensed together.

Time was hard to measure in this place. Perhaps it was a few

hours. Or perhaps just several moments had passed from when Bai Yunfei ‘opened’ his eyes.

But whatever the case was, all he could feel in this one moment was unlimited ‘power’.

‘Looking’ down, Bai Yunfei could see the elemental fire condense and take on the form of a palm.

Somehow, Bai Yunfei was melding the elemental fire of this space into a ‘body’!

“Will this....be enough?” Bai Yunfei clenched his fist tightly. “I can feel my ‘consciousness’ is a lot stronger than before. Can I leave this place now?”

“Eh? Hold on....” Just at that moment, his eyes could see an object floating several meters in front of him; a brick!

Startled, Bai Yunfei thought to himself, “Hold on, just hold on! You’re telling me this thing is still here?!”

Bai Yunfei hadn’t realized it before since he had been so caught up in forming a body for himself, but this brick had been constantly floating by his side!

Somehow, Bai Yunfei had the feeling that the brick was....

Protecting him?

Even as his mind came up with this outlandish thought, Bai Yunfei’s ‘hand’ reached out to grab at the brick.

But as soon as his ‘hand’ made contact with the brick, a new development immediately took place!

Making contact with the brick had been like some sort of switch being flicked on. The entire space around Bai Yunfei began to tremble and shake. All of the energy inside and all of the soul armaments that were still floating around began to act as one. As if being ordered by something, they started to fly towards Bai Yunfei—or perhaps it’d be more accurate to say they were flying towards

the brick in Bai Yunfei's hand!

In the instance where his consciousness had lost balance once again, Bai Yunfei felt a notification streak across his mind.

Soul Binding Successful....

.....

At the crafting caves of the Western Point.

Time had barely started to move for those at the top of the destroyed cliff side. Some of the stones were still dropping from the skies while Bai Yunfei was still sleeping on the ground.

Suddenly, the 'object' that had been floating up above Bai Yunfei's body began to swell and expand outwards. In several seconds, the object became cuboid in shape and slowly took on the shape of....the brick!

At the same time, the essence fireseed that had been burning almost silently to itself on the ground jerked slightly. As if being summoned, the essence fireseed flew up to touch with the 'brick'!

Like a chain reaction, the surrounding air bubble around the objects began to swirl around rapidly. Contracting even faster and faster, the ripples around its outer shell started to scan Bai Yunfei and the brick next to him.

Moments later, the air bubble around the two gradually started to dissipate as if it had never existed to begin with....

In the next moment, the floating brick released a flash of red light, assisting the previously fist-sized flame into the air and returning into Bai Yunfei's body like a tired bird coming back to roost.

Finally, there was a chance to the previously sleeping soundly Bai Yunfei. A finger on his hand twitched slightly and his eyebrows

wrinkled together by a small margin. His lips trembled somewhat as if he was experiencing some sort of pain...

When all of the light was gone, the brick slowly descended down onto Bai Yunfei's chest. From the looks of things, this brick looked no different than from what it was before as a +13 one.

Though the light around the brick was gone, the place was still lit up in a red hue as it was before.

This was because of the light from the elemental fire. It was starting to congregate on the outside of Bai Yunfei's body!

.....

From the outside, the red light illuminated the night skies quite nicely. There were even some parts of the sky where the air twisted in on itself like a ripple of water across a pond...

And in the next moment, the silhouette of a person came walking out from the air!

This person wore white robes to complement his elderly white hair. Despite the color in his hair, the man looked to be in his sixties and was relatively average in appearance. An appearance honed from age and a kindly expression reminiscent of a benevolent old man.

But the fact remained that the elder was standing up in the air. From this alone, one could tell that he was no ordinary old man.

His eyes swept across the place, confused. "Strange," he muttered, "I could've sworn there was a law I've never felt before....did I imagine things?"

His eyes fell upon Bai Yunfei who was still strewn about over the ruined caves. "He managed to destroy half the cliff-side....what a hot-headed child."

And yet, how did he manage to pull this off?"

"Hm? I can see that he's..."

From right behind, the sound of wind blowing around the place made itself clear. Several figures came flying over before coming to a stop behind him.

The elders of the Crafting School, Kou Changkong, Xiao Binzi, Huangfu Nan, and Cang Yu; they've all assembled in this one place!

Both Kou Changkong and Xiao Binzi had a faint red glow outlining their figures while Huangfu Nan and Cang Yu had a congealed red light underneath their feet.

Nodding his head, Xiao Binzi greeted the first person to arrive, "Brother."

Kou Changkong bowed his head to the man, "Master."

Both Huangfu Nan and Cang Yu bowed their waists deeply, "Master."

This person was the headmaster of the previous generation, Zi Jin!!

The man gave a faint nod of his head in response before diverting his attention back to Bai Yunfei. "Changkong, is this youngster from the internal school?"

Kou Changkong had already seen that it was indeed Bai Yunfei who was laying down on the ruined grounds of the cliff. Surprised by what he saw, the man answered Zi Jin with an incredulous expression, "Master, this one is called Bai Yunfei. He's a disciple I decided to take in three months ago."

"Eh? A disciple?" Zi Jin's eyebrows rose up on his face. "And three months ago, you say? He was only in our school for three months?"

"Yes." Kou Changkong nodded. "He joined when he was a late-stage Soul Sprite. His talent at crafting allowed him to walk 3.7 kilometers into the cave, but then...."

Kou Changkong began to explain the backstory of Bai Yunfei to Zi

Jin. Afterward, Zi Jin remarked in surprise, “He was able to withstand nine rounds in there? He was able to make a late-human tier soul armament in three months then! How could it be that he was only able to walk 3.7 kilometers then? There must be a mistake in the trial....

“Tasking him with the creation of an earth tier soul armament is far too harsh of a trial, don’t you think?”

“I only wished to see his determination at that time. After much consideration, I decided to forego that trial and took him in as a disciple.” Kou Changkong mentioned. He sighed when his eyes met Bai Yunfei’s body, “But he must’ve been too stubborn. Eager to prove something, he must’ve made a mistake, resulting in this. It’s a good thing nothing else happened....”

“Nothing happened? Senior, you speak quite lightly of the situation. The cliff was made to be dense beyond all else. Even an explosion from making an earth tier soul armament shouldn’t be able to cause anything like this. But this youngster has managed to destroy half the cliff, what in the world could possibly accomplish that?” Huangfu Nan exclaimed. “This youth is an enigma! What has he done now, we must find out!”

As he spoke, Huangfu Nan was already moving to reach Bai Yunfei. A single footstep was all it took before the man had bounded several hundred meters down to where Bai Yunfei was.

But just as he knelt down to touch Bai Yunfei, something unexpected happened!

Chapter 223: Becoming a Soul Ancestor!

But just as he knelt down to touch Bai Yunfei, something unexpected happened!

From out of the blue, the brick that had been lying inconspicuously on top of Bai Yunfei's chest flew straight up into the air. In a flash of orange light, the brick moved to protect Bai Yunfei from the man!

Huangfu Nan had been caught completely off guard by this situation, but he was still an expert of the late-stage Soul Exalt level. Flying in retreat, both of his hands flew up in a flash of red to protect himself when the brick made contact with them.

“Pow!!”

The sound of a brick hitting flesh run through the air, resulting in Huangfu Nan being sent backward. It was only ten meters in recoil, but the man's feet dragged across the air. Soon after, a series of 'steps' made from elemental fire materialized underneath his feet, allowing the man to come to a stop.

“.....”

Everyone was speechless. They could all see the orange light irradiating from the brick as clear as day.

Even Zi Jin was speechless!

“Automatic protection....that's a lifebound armament! Impossible!!”

A strange light flickered in Zi Jin's eyes. His right hand moved to take out a black sphere before tossing it towards Bai Yunfei.

“Clank!”

Once again, the brick moved out to slam against the black sphere. The two objects came to a stop.

The orange light that had been around the brick grew darker for

just a slight second before returning back to normal.

In fact, the light was even brighter than before.

As for the black ball, it returned back to Zi Jin's hand.

“Heaven tier!!”

Both Xiao Binzi and Kou Changkong snapped out from their thoughts at this announcement. No longer acting as apathetic to situations as he would before, Xiao Binzi spoke first with eyes honed in on Bai Yunfei, “A heaven tier lifebound armament? But how! That kid's strength shouldn't be capable of crafting such a grade! What in the world happened?!”

On the other hand, Kou Changkong looked down on the ground, “Ling Yan is down there, let us ask him!”

A bright ray of red light immediately shot forth from his hand, jettisoning towards the ground a thousand meters beneath the group.

Down below, several disciples were all staring at the completely devastated cliffs with fingers that pointed at it while they gesticulated to one another.

Standing at the very front of the group was the third senior of the Western Point, Ling Yan. He had noticed the group of elders gathered above them beforehand, but just as he was prepared to head up to meet them, a ray of red light met him first. Surrounding his person, the red light then levitated the youth into the air to bring him to the elders.

Ling Yan's sudden departure did not go unnoticed by the other students. Upon realizing that the headmaster and other seniors were above them, the students all let out gasps before speaking to one another in more quiet voices than before.

In no time at all, Ling Yan was brought to the front of the seniors. Managing to calm himself in time, Ling Yan greeted the men, “Junior Ling Yan pays his respects to master, the previous

headmaster, and the elders!”

Changkong nodded his head to accept the greeting. “Ling Yan, can you tell us what happened here? What happened to Yunfei, do you know the details?”

Regarding Bai Yunfei with a bespectacled look, Ling Yan thought for a moment on what to say.

At last, he then spoke, “Master, I’ve been in my own cave since yesternight, but junior Bai was in the cave next to me. About an hour ago, I felt something odd going on in his cave along with a wave of energy that got stronger with time. I didn’t really pay much attention at the time since I thought that it was just a small problem at first.

“But the energy continued to grow stronger! Just ten minutes ago, it was at least a hundred time stronger than before. I was afraid of the danger, so I prepared to call junior Bai out and report to master when it became a storm. This was the aftermath of that....” Ling Yan stopped there to nod at the surrounding area. “It was far stronger than I thought if it could destroy half the cliff! It’s a good thing I warned some people earlier, otherwise....”

“Is that it?” Unsatisfied, Kou Changkong pressed on, “Do you know what in the world Yunfei was crafting? Or what caused this?”

“I....” Ling Yan’s voice wavered. “Junior Bai was crafting by himself, so I’m...I’m not sure....”

Taking in the answer silently, Kou Changkong waved his hand, “Tell the students to disperse. The cliff is off-limits for the time being!”

“Yes, master!”

Dropping Ling Yan back down onto the ground, Kou Changkong watched as the disciple begin to order everyone to leave the place. This part of the Western Point became silent after some time with

only five people left here and the glowing-red Bai Yunfei.

After being so silent for such a long time, Zi Jin chose now to speak up, “Changkong, have you looked into his identity? Do you think he’s related to him?”

“According to our investigations, he shouldn’t be....” Kou Changkong shook his head before telling Zi Jin of what they knew about Bai Yunfei.

“Oh? Someone who had a ‘chanced’ meeting with Ge Yiyun? And an acquaintance to Hong Yin, the son of the Wolf King?” Zi Jin hummed in surprise at Bai Yunfei’s background. “What the Fate School calls ‘fate’ might be said to be imaginary, but it really is something quite mystical. If it was Ge Yiyun who helped him, then there should be no problems with this one....”

“Yes,” Kou Changkong nodded, “I believed such as well. Let us wait for Yunfei to wake first before anything else is done.”

Silent since her arrival, Cang Yu finally spoke up at this juncture in concern, “Senior, is Yunfei in any danger? Perhaps we should...”

Startled by her response, Kou Changkong smiled to relieve her. “Junior, you shouldn’t worry. I’m sure that Yunfei only lost consciousness after the explosion. He has something protecting him from any danger already, I’m sure that it won’t be long before he wakes up again.”

Cang Yu’s eyebrows crinkled together nonetheless, “But...”

She hadn’t even been able to finish her words before everyone suddenly swung their heads to look towards Bai Yunfei.

The red light that had been glossed over Bai Yunfei’s body like a transparent cocoon finally started to dissipate. Then, as if being swung by something, the elemental fire around Bai Yunfei began to swirl and form a vortex about a hundred meter in diameter!

The vortex swirled faster and faster in on itself with Bai Yunfei at its center. When the vortex came into being, the space around Bai

Yunfei started to twist in on itself while being saturated with more and more elemental fire. The elemental fire that had been sucked into the vortex then began to drain into Bai Yunfei's body!

At first, Cang Yu was confused on what was going on. But then she realized the truth of the matter, "Yunfei's making a breakthrough! He's becoming a Soul Ancestor!"

As of right now, Bai Yunfei felt as if he was stuck in a chaotic space.

He had immediately lost consciousness when his hand made contact with the floating brick back at that 'strange space'. When he woke, he could 'see' nothing around him now. All he could feel was an unbelievably warm sensation envelop him for a snug and cozy experience.

It almost felt like he was flying. What constituted this space was like his body now, and it corresponded to his control as his own flesh and blood would.

Not much time went by before Bai Yunfei felt the warm sensation around his body slowly leave him.

Then when his body felt light, Bai Yunfei knew that he had finally returned to his original body.

"Good...my body's still here...."

Was Bai Yunfei's first thought.

A warm sensation, unlike the previous one, entered his body next. It flowed into his body into an unending stream. Though his mind was kept hazy as a side-effect, the sensation wasn't all too bad.

"Crack...."

At some point, the sound of something cracking from within the depth of his soul split the silence. What came after that was a stream of information and images that flowed incessantly into his

mind....

A city flourishing with life. Buildings of strange shape and material. People hustling and bustling down the streets wearing all sorts of strange clothes. And even stranger, chariots that seemed to travel at breakneck speeds...

The slumbering fragments of memories that lay dormant in the depths of Bai Yunfei's soul was suddenly showing the memories it had straight into Bai Yunfei's mind!

Time had no meaning for Bai Yunfei as he accepted the information. The information had been far too much for him to take in, resulting in him fainting once more.

Who knew how many times he had fallen unconscious over the span of today?

On the outside, the raging ripples of elemental fire began to draw in on itself before being absorbed into Bai Yunfei's body.

Even the brick itself had lost its luster. With a plop, the brick fell down by Bai Yunfei's side.

And so, the peak of the Western Point was finally back at its long-needed silence....

Chapter 224: Awakening (First)

An icy-cold sensation flitted across his forehead. Though cold in temperature, it was comforting in its touch on his head.

“Urgh....”

At last recovering somewhat from his ordeals, Bai Yunfei let out a small grunt.

“Oh! Senior Bai’s awake! Senior Bai’s awake!”

From somewhere around him, the excited voice of a person repeated itself before drawing farther away from him.

Bai Yunfei wished to open his eyes, but for some reason, his eyelids felt as if they were being weighed down by a thousand pounds of weight. It was a mystery on who was speaking, as the voice barely registered to his ears.

Some time went by before his mind cleared up enough for Bai Yunfei to think about circulating his soulforce.

“Boom!”

It came as a complete and total surprise to Bai Yunfei when the small amount of soulforce he was trying to move had suddenly come galloping out from his chest. In no time, the entire outer layer of his body was filled with his soulforce!

“Whoosh!”

So startled was Bai Yunfei that he leaped out from his spot, scattering the quilts that had been covering his body to the ground. It was then that he realized his resting spot had been above a bed—he was back in his own room on the Western Point.

“Haha, Yunfei, you’re finally awake I see....”

The sound of gentle laughter came from the side.

Turning his head, Bai Yunfei was surprised to see just who his

visitors were!

Kou Changkong, Xiao Binzi, Huangfu Nan, and Cang Yu were all standing by Bai Yunfei's bed. And in front of them, another old man with white hair stared kindly at him.

For a while, Bai Yunfei didn't understand what was going on, but he stood up to bow to them only to realize that he was clothed in nothing but his underwear!

"Er...." Locking up into place, an embarrassed look reached Bai Yunfei's face.

"Haha, don't be flustered, go and put on a fresh change of clothes." The strange elder chuckled at the slight misfortune Bai Yunfei was in.

With all the speed he could muster, Bai Yunfei changed into a new suit of robes and dressed himself down. Bowing properly to the seniors in front of him, Bai Yunfei spoke, "Junior Bai pays his respects to the master, the elders, and the...."

His salutations stopped there due to his confusion on what to call this next person.

"This is the master of your master. The previous headmaster of the school." Kou Changkong warned.

Shock gripped at Bai Yunfei's heart. Never did he imagine that this elder right in front of him would be the 'legendary' headmaster Zi Jin. Bowing his head deep, Bai Yunfei spoke, "This junior pays his respects to the previous headmaster!"

"Yes," Zi Jin nodded his head with a smile, "There's no need for such politeness. Come sit, I've questions I'd like to ask you."

.....

All of the elders were now situated by the table in Bai Yunfei's room. Bai Yunfei himself was seated at the table, but he felt it extremely awkward and so he jerked and looked around himself

every so often.

“Master, are you all here today about...”

He hesitated here, afraid of continuing his question.

Kou Changkong gave a small smile. “Yunfei, I’d like to ask you, what were you doing the night before yesterday in your cave?”

“The night before yesterday?” Bai Yunfei repeated. “I....I was out for an entire day?” He asked.

“To be more precise, it was a day and two nights.” Cang Yu smiled.

“Bai, are you still sleepy in the head? Do you understand what you’ve done to the caves that night?” Huangfu Nan shook his head in impatience.

“Uh....what happened?”

“You blew up half the cliff!!”

“.....”

For a bit, Bai Yunfei went dumb.

But Kou Changkong shook his head as if to give comfort, “Yunfei, don’t pay attention to that for now. We’ve repaired the caves already. You just need to tell us, what happened that night?”

“It’s already repaired? The second elder said I blew up half of it and it’s already repaired?!” Bai Yunfei practically screamed to himself. He wanted to ask how in the world they managed to repair the cliff, but he knew better than to ask that now. Bowing his head down, Bai Yunfei let everyone stare at him even more as he tried to think of an answer.

After a long period of silence, Bai Yunfei finally looked back up at them. “Master, your disciple was trying to craft an earth tier soul armament so I tried to make use of the compression method....”

“What?!”

Everyone's face changed drastically at the very mention of the compression method. Huangfu Nan spoke up first, "You used the compression method?! Are you not aware that this requires one to be a Soul Ancestor before even attempting? Even a primary-stage Soul Ancestor has a failure rate of at least ten percent; calling you reckless wouldn't even be enough to do you justice!"

"I...." A reaction the size of this magnitude had been unexpected to Bai Yunfei. Was the compression method perhaps an extremely serious topic?

"Don't interrupt him, let Yunfei finish speaking." Cang Yu shot Huangfu Nan a withering glare.

Thinking a little more about what happened, Bai Yunfei spoke, "Your disciple....didn't really think about how serious it'd be. When I....when I started, everything was going well. It was when I compressed several ores that things...."

Since there was nothing that could be said to be a 'secret' when Bai Yunfei was attempting the compression method, Bai Yunfei hid nothing in his story.

"What?! Not only were the supplementary materials not enough, you also tossed in several vermiculite and primal stones?!" Huangfu Nan exploded once more in stupefaction. "Are you an idiot?! You weren't even running for your life by that point, did you want to die a terrible death?!"

"I...." Bai Yunfei was speechless. He knew that he had been far too rash in his actions. All he could think about was how he had lost control of the energy, then lost the opportunity to run away, and then he lost mobility in his body.

By the time Bai Yunfei finished the next part of his story of when he tossed in several types of equipment, everyone listening was staring at him strangely. Huangfu Nan himself passed up on the opportunity to berate him. Rather than criticism, there was a look of admiration in his eyes.

Whatever it was that Huangfu Nan felt admiration for, Bai Yunfei didn't know.

“.....”

“Then when I ran out of soul armament to use, I accidentally threw in one of my more important soul armament. Out of reflex, my hand reached in to grab it, but my hand stretched too far into the cauldron by then....After that, the energy finally broke loose in the cauldron and knocked me out. When I awoke, I found that my mind was in a strange place....”

He completely glossed over the Upgrade Technique and how he had upgraded several items in this strange place. The strange experiences that happened to him afterward were something he wanted to understand as well, so he tried his best to explain the situation in hopes that someone in his audience was experienced enough to give him an explanation.

But Bai Yunfei had been so caught up trying to recall and retell the story that he didn't even notice that everyone was in a state of stunned silence from listening to his story....

“....And after that, I lost consciousness again until I woke up just now.....”

Finally ending his story, Bai Yunfei took in a deep breath and looked up; only to be surprised at what he saw.

Everyone's eyes were as wide as they could be as if they had all seen something strange beyond strange. It was unsightly to see, and even the previous headmaster Zi Jin hadn't bothered to hide his emotions. He instead looked to Bai Yunfei with complete and utter shock.

And a great amount of satisfaction too.

“The Anima Realm! That's the Anima Realm!! Haha! It all makes sense now! There is no questioning how you crafted a lifebound armament then! Haha, excellent, excellent I say!” Zi Jin exclaimed

aloud.

He hadn't been untruthful on how he felt and spoke what was on his mind. Even his final words weren't even enough to fully convey the excitement he felt right now.

Chapter 225: The Anima Realm and Lifebound Armaments! (Second)

Startled by how excited this person was and confused by the terms he was speaking aloud, Bai Yunfei couldn't help but ask, "Senior....this 'Anima Realm' and 'lifebound armament'....what are they?"

Kou Changkong had finally regained awareness of the situation at hand. Regarding Bai Yunfei's vacant expression with a proud smile, he spoke, "Yunfei, your performance has been outstanding! Ever since you've joined the Crafting School, you've managed to exceed each and every expectation I've had for you! As your master, I'm proud of you! What you've accomplished today is a surprise for the entire school!"

"Uh....." Bai Yunfei was lost once again. "Since when did I become so 'great'? Didn't I just blow up half the cliff a while ago?"

Giving himself a few seconds to gather his thoughts, Kou Changkong began to explain to Bai Yunfei, "They weren't things you'd needed to know when you first joined the Crafting School. But since you've somehow managed to land yourself into the Anima Realm, it's time that I tell you now."

He paused here. "Anima Realm is an extremely mystical realm that'll only make itself known when crafting a soul armament. To be more clear, this realm is known to be where one becomes the 'soul of the soul armament'. When infusing one's very soul into a soul armament, this realm leaves behind an eternal mark on the soul, much like what happens in a soul contract. The mark left behind on the soul armament are what we of the Crafting School call, 'lifebound armaments'!"

"Lifebound armaments are a level higher than soulbound armaments. In fact, they're on completely different scales so-to-speak. One must have reached at least a 50% soul compatibility

with a soul armament to turn it into a soulbound armament. But lifebound armaments require a soul compatibility of at least 100%! The creation of a lifebound armament establishes a connection between the soul armament and the spirit. It's said that lifebound armaments become an extension of one's body, and aside from its master, no one else can ever use it!"

"The strength of a regular soul armament is often something many people struggle to make use of. The more compatible one gets with a soulbound armament, the more powerful it'll be. As for lifebound armaments, it wouldn't be strange to see its power double, triple, or even increase by a dozen fold!!"

"Soulbound armaments are usually made after becoming a Soul Sprite by making use of the essence fireseed during the time. Of course, the method you made use of before was of an extremely special nature. Aside from our Crafting School, there'll never be a second chance like this. We cannot always offer this method, that's why only disciples are given access to it."

"After crafting a soulbound armament, there's a chance to increase one's compatibility with it each time they grow stronger in strength. It's a difficult task, and sometimes their compatibility barely goes up. And just like a soulbound armament, a soul cultivator has only one chance to craft a lifebound armament!"

Throughout the explanation of lifebound armaments and the realm known as the Anima Realm, Bai Yunfei had been utterly dumbfounded.

When Kou Changkong mentioned that only one chance was to be had to craft a lifebound armament, Bai Yunfei couldn't stop himself from asking, "What...what chance is there?"

"When one becomes a Soul King! In the moment one steps into that realm, there's a chance to step into the realm of Anima and craft a lifebound armament. But the chances of that happening is only 1%.....when I and the first elder became Soul Kings, we never

managed to step into that realm. Out of the entire Crafting School right now, only the previous headmaster Zi Jin has a lifebound armament....”

“....” Bai Yunfei had nothing to say.

Becoming a Soul King! Wow!

What an unreasonable opportunity!

And 1% chance to boot, that was a lowly chance....

But what Kou Changkong said next left him even more speechless than before.

“What I just explained is the ‘normal’ way to craft a lifebound armament in regards to the Anima Realm. Aside from taking the chance by becoming a Soul King, there is another situation just like how you accomplished it. That is by stumbling in onto the realm when crafting a soul armament....But the last time someone managed to accomplish that in the Crafting School was about eight hundred years ago....”

Eight hundred years ago....

What Kou Changkong was meaning to say was that Bai Yunfei was a genius that appeared once in eight hundred years!

“And now you know,” Kou Changkong smiled, “how surprised we were to hear this?”

It really was far too shocking to think about. This time, it took several minutes for Bai Yunfei to recollect his thoughts. Even then, he was doubtful about what he managed to accomplish.

But then, a thought occurred to him, “Oh....master, you said I crafted a lifebound armament, that means....”

“Haha, I remember now. You were unconscious when we found you. Do you know what type of lifebound armament you’ve made?” Cang Yu finally asked from her spot behind Bai Yunfei’s bed. “Perhaps because of your special circumstances when

crafting, your lifebound armament was...equally special....”

When Bai Yunfei turned to look where she was looking, the expression on his face immediately hardened. Exasperation greeted his face at what he saw—it was the brick!

Cang Yu had thought that this was the form Bai Yunfei’s crafting attempt had made, but Bai Yunfei knew that it was actually the +13 brick he had since forever! It even had the same nicks and jags in the exact same places!

Just as Bai Yunfei was just thinking about picking up the brick to look, it suddenly sprung up into the air and flew straight towards him.

“Wha—”

He yelped.

Smiling, Kou Changkong said, “That is one of the special properties of a lifebound armament. As long as there’s soulforce, it can be controlled at a thought within a thousand meters.”

Bai Yunfei watched as the brick float in the air for a while. He didn’t quite know what to do. It had a ‘familiar’ feel to him as if he was controlling his own flesh and blood.

In fact, it felt ten times easier to control the movements of the brick than the fire-tipped spear.

“So this is a lifebound armament....”

Bai Yunfei thought with excitement. When he lifted his right hand, the red brick immediately flew towards it....

“.....”

Time stopped for several seconds there when Bai Yunfei suddenly came to that realization. When he paused, his face had mirrored his look of shock.

“What is it, Yunfei? Do you feel the huge difference in between a soulbound armament and a lifebound armament?” Kou

Changkong smiled. “You should experience the wonders of it on your own time. This lifebound armament of yours is of the mid-heaven tier, I’m sure of it. Aside from a high-heaven tier armament, there is no other armament that could hope to fight against it. But with your current strength, it should be difficult for you to make use of it.

“But don’t feel discouraged. As you grow stronger, you’ll be able to make use of more of its power.”

“Ah? Y-yes....” Bai Yunfei replied hastily after realizing that he had been lost in thought. Embarrassed, Bai Yunfei stored the brick away into his space ring.

Kou Changkong watched Bai Yunfei go through his thoughts in silence for a while before he decided to warn Bai Yunfei, “Yunfei, I must warn you. You managed to profit from disaster this time around. By this, I mean that it was a lucky coincidence that you managed to make it into the Anima Realm and craft a lifebound armament. A lucky happenstance that won’t happen again for a second time, so try not to be so hot-headed next time. Otherwise, the resulting situation won’t be like the first time....”

Bowing his head, Bai Yunfei replied, “Your disciple will do as you say, master.”

He wouldn’t repeat such a dangerous affair like that even if he was beaten to death....

“Alright. Yunfei has become a Soul Ancestor already, so he’ll need some time to consolidate his strength. We should take our leave.” Zi Jin, who had been silent up until now, finally spoke up to the others.

Kou Changkong nodded his head in agreement. “Yes, that we should. Yunfei, rest up for a day or two. We’ll talk more another time.”

Standing up to bow, Bai Yunfei spoke, “Yes, master.”

.....

After seeing the five elders off, Bai Yunfei let out a sigh of relief.

Feeling somewhat light-headed with so many things to think about, Bai Yunfei shook his head in an attempt to clear his thoughts and calm down.

But just before he could do anything else, a sharp knock made itself known from the other side of the door.

Chapter 226: An Upgrade in the Upgrade Technique! (Third)

“Senior Bai, may I come in?” Came the voice. It was his next door neighbor, Si Kongxian.

Though surprised by his voice, Bai Yunfei spoke out, “Come in.”

As the door came open with a creaking sound, Bai Yunfei was able to see that it wasn’t just one person there; there were multiple people coming in!

Senior Song Lin, second senior Xiao Nanren, third senior Ling Yang, seniors Li Tiechui, Lian Lingmin, his juniors Tian Yuhang, Si Kongxian, Zhang Sanxian, Ye Zhiqiu, Mo Xiaoxuan, Xi Yan, Zhong Xuhao, Liu Mang....and even Tang Xinyun and Huangfu Rui were in attendance.

As the group of people swarmed into his room, Bai Yunfei found himself surrounded by them all.

“Junior Bai, how’re you feeling?”

“Senior Bai, I heard that you blew up half the caves, you’re amazing...”

“Brother Bai, what were the headmaster and the other elders talking to you about? They’re not punishing you, are they?”

“Yunfei, what happened to you that day?”

“Brother strawhat, you’re finally up! You’re even lazier than Xiao Rourou if you slept for two days! You made sis Yun worry about you the entire two days; she didn’t even have time to play with me....”

“Xiao Rui, wh—what are you saying, I....”

“.....”

.....

The way how everyone spoke over one another gave Bai Yunfei such a headache that he felt extremely faint.

It was with great difficulty that Bai Yunfei managed to discern that everyone knew he had been awake for some time. But with the headmaster and the other elders there, there was no way they'd barge to interrupt them. So they had to wait in Si Kongxian's room until they left.

And so; Bai Yunfei answered to each person one by one before the room devolved again into a noisy place.

It took an entire hour before Song Lin was the first to say that Bai Yunfei needed some rest. With his announcement, everyone else decided to leave the room.

As Bai Yunfei watched the group walk out and away, he had a small smile on his lips.

Having such concerned friends like these had made Bai Yunfei feel very happy.

Shutting the doors closed in thought, Bai Yunfei headed straight for the underneath basement rather than his bed.

.....

Illuminated by the light stones there, Bai Yunfei sat down on the ground and breathed in and out in relaxation. One after another, he started to think about each thing that happened to him today.

The first and most important thing was his current strength.

Upon further investigation, he could tell that the amount of elemental fire and soulforce in his body was many times stronger than before. At a wave of his hand, a flurry of red light sparked into sight as a wave of fire materialized into the room!

Gesturing with the same hand, the ocean of fire moved swiftly to form a giant vortex instead. Spinning rapidly around the room, it shrunk down into the center to form a brilliant fireball that floated

over the top of his palm.

The corners of Bai Yunfei's lips curled upwards as he observed the fireball he was controlling. Clenching his fist tightly, he scattered the fireball into every direction outwards. With its concentrated form broken, the flames were forced to flow away from its original spot in huge droves.

“Is this the Soul Ancestor realm? I feel far stronger than before.....I can even control the elemental fire on a far better level now.

“It's as if Soul Sprites could only ‘borrow’ the usage of the elemental fire in the world and Soul Ancestors can ‘use’ it. This....this is a new world of understanding.

“The intensity of the flames is stronger too....I don't know how strong, but using the Eighty One Fold Fist Force from the Overlapping Waves Art should be easy to do now....”

Now was the day that Bai Yunfei finally realized the true extent to how terrifying of a soul skill the Overlapping Wave Arts was. The physical-type soul skill given to him by Ge Yiyun that showed its strongest at the realm of the Soul Ancestors. The aftermath of the blows was inconceivable to think about.

But this still required experimentation to fully understand everything.

Shaking his head, Bai Yunfei muttered to himself, “Well, let's see the Upgrade Technique then....”

When he turned his right hand over, the newly-made lifebound armament that was the brick appeared in it. A flash of suspicion gleamed over his eyes first before shock replaced it.

And then joy.

"The Upgrade Technique was....'improved'!!"

Concentrating onto the brick even more now, Bai Yunfei looked

at the notification that popped up.

Unique Equipment
<p>Equipment Grade: Normal (Regular Mode)</p> <p>Elemental Affinity: Earth</p> <p>Upgrade Level: +13</p> <p>Attack: 9</p> <p>Additional Attack: 132</p> <p>Soul Compatibility: 100%</p> <p>+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 5% chance to inflict confusion for a maximum of 3 seconds.</p> <p>(If attacking the head, increase this chance to 10%.)</p> <p>Cooldown of 10 seconds.</p> <p>+12 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to stun the target for a maximum of 5 seconds.</p> <p>(If attacking the head, increase this chance to 20%.) Cooldown of 15 seconds.</p> <p>+13 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 50% chance to hurl the target.</p> <p>Cooldown of 3 seconds.</p> <p>Upgrade Requirement: 105 Soulpoints</p>
<p>Equipment Grade: Mid Earth (Special Mode)</p> <p>Elemental Affinity: Fire, Wind</p> <p>Upgrade Level: +13</p> <p>Attack: 988</p> <p>Additional Attack: 4430</p> <p>Soul Compatibility: 100%</p> <p>+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to activate ‘Constricting Flames’ and inflict a 10% decrease in mobility for a maximum of ten seconds.</p> <p>Cooldown of 1 minute.</p> <p>+12 Additional Effect: In exchange for soulforce, summon a shield made of elemental earth. The more soulforce used, the stronger the shield. The total defense of the shield cannot exceed the attack of the weapon.</p> <p>(Ineffective against mind-based attacks).</p> <p>+13 Additional Effect: In exchange for soulforce, expand the weapon up to ten thousand times its size. The attack will remain the same but can be controlled up to eight thousand meters away from the user.</p> <p>Upgrade Requirement: 105 Soulpoints</p>

.....

It took a while for Bai Yunfei to fully digest the extent of the two notifications in front of him.

Bai Yunfei had found out about the brick back when the elders had been there. But what Kou Changkong and the others couldn't possibly know was that the stats of the brick was far more astounding than at first glance. But there was no way Bai Yunfei would tell them about that.

Not caring to think any more about the brick, Bai Yunfei moved on onto the Flameblade Bracer on his right arm and inspected the stats.

Equipment Grade: Low Earth

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Upgrade Level: +12

Defense: 753

Additional Defense: 706

Soul Compatibility: 60%

+10 Additional Effect: When blocking, there is a 9% chance of absorbing and converting the attack power for the next strike.

(This converted power can be held for a maxium of 3 seconds and cannot exceed the total amount of defense of the equipment.)

Cooldown of 30 seconds.

+12 Additional Effect: By using soulpoints, summon a flaming winged dagger. While in use, it will consume soulpoints. The power is determined by the number of soulpoints used.

Upgrade Requirement: 97 Soulpoints

Narrowing his eyes, Bai Yunfei moved onto the Fire-tipped Spear

Equipment Grade: High Earth

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Upgrade Level: +12

Attack: 1380

Additional Attack: 1300

Soul Compatibility: 66%

+10 Additional Effect: When thrusting, there is a 20% chance of causing an explosion. The strength of the explosion will be 150% of the weapon's attack.

Cooldown of 20 seconds.

+12 Additional Effect: Create two doppelgangers with strength equivalent to 50% of the caster's total strength at the time of casting for a duration of 3 seconds.

Cooldown of 1 hour.

Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

Again silent, Bai Yunfei took out the Glacial Pricker.

Equipment Grade: Low Human

Elemental Affinity: Ice

Attack: 237 Additional Attack: 128

Soul Compatibility: 13%

+10 Additional Effect: When thrown, the speed and attack are increased. The multiplier in which it is increased by is determined by the amount of soulforce.

(Cannot exceed three times the normal amount.)

Upgrade Requirement: 63 Soulpoints

.....

The several armaments he took out was enough for Bai Yunfei to fall silent in thought.

“There’s a few notifications with some small changes, like their grades. Becoming a Soul Ancestor made the additional effects have more details as well if there’s a ‘cooldown time’ now....” Bai Yunfei muttered.

“Elemental affinities are easy enough to explain; the degree of soul compatibility is too. Both the Fire-tipped Spear and the

Flameblade Bracer are above the 50% degree, and the 'lifebound armament' brick is at 100%. That falls in line with what master was talking about soul compatibility earlier.

How strange...why do I feel as if these notifications are... becoming more in line with the rules of this world?"

From the very beginning, the Upgrade Technique had always a few set of details that gave off a disharmonious feeling in comparison to the world he lived in.

It was different now though. Was the Upgrade Technique 'integrating' itself with the rules of the world??

Unbeknownst to him, what happened that very night had brought the Upgrade Technique into an unprecedented level of madness. Once more, the planar laws of the world had appeared and fused again with the Upgrade Technique!

The Upgrade Technique had its own set of rules from the world it came from. When it fused with the planar laws of this world the first time, there were some discrepancies between the two worlds. And when they fused a second time, the two systems were 'combined' and conformed into a more fitting system. After the adjustments, the Upgrade Technique was now far more fitting in this new world.

Author Note: In truth, I, Yun Hai, decided to make use of this upgrade of the Upgrade Technique to fix a few consistencies. The original ranks for the soul armaments were subject to annoyance from a few of the readers, so I decided to get rid of this issue by unifying the two systems. The previous ranking system such as inheritance and regalia will thus be used for something else in the future.

"I didn't think I'd have a 13% compatibility with the Glacial Pricker already. Was it because I upgraded it before?"

"But what's even more strange is that the brick has two modes. Is

it because it's a lifebound armament? Did it mutate sometime in that night?"

Even after thinking for a while, Bai Yunfei had no answers, so he stored the soul armaments away. He wanted to try out the strange properties of the brick, but now wasn't the right time for that.

"In any case, there's nothing wrong with the Upgrade Technique being upgraded. But...is that really it? An upgrade like this is....how do I say it...." Bai Yunfei struggled to think for a moment before a realization hit him.

"Oh! Hold on...."

Chapter 227: Memory of Another

Bai Yunfei shook his right hand so that a fist-sized white rock appeared in it.

It was the upgrade stone.

Unique Equipment
Equipment Grade: High Human Elemental Affinity: None
Special Effect 1: Increase the chance of success when upgrading by 100%. Cannot be stacked with the effect of another item.
Special Effect 2: Increase the chance of success when crafting by 50%. Cannot be stacked with the effect of another item.
Cannot be upgraded.

Author note: To shed some more light on this situation, increasing the chance of success when upgrading by 100% means that if the original chance of success was 10%, it'll be 20% after that.

Bai Yunfei was overjoyed, “As I thought, this was the biggest change from the Upgrade Technique!!

“In that case....” Bai Yunfei thought back to the crafting cauldron in his space ring in preparation to take a look at the stats.

But then he remembered something crucial; “How could I forget, the cauldron was blown up by me....I’ll have to wait for master to give me another before I can do any more research.

“Increase the chance of success by 100%. From a purely numerical point of view, this means that the chance of success for

anything is doubled....But there's no way to find out the exact chance of success to begin with! Ugh. If only I knew the chance of success to begin with; everything would be nice and dandy then....

“But what's even better is the fact that the stone affects the chance of success when crafting too! I wonder if the Crafting School even knows about such a stone, or if they have any....”

Bai Yunfei was silent as he stored the upgrade stone away. He couldn't use such a stone so easily.

“Well now....” Bai Yunfei massaged the temples to his head, “There's still a few things left to worry about....

“The Earth, video games, cars, movies, the army....what are these things; are they real? Is there really a world so different to this one?” Bai Yunfei thought. This was a question that hurt his head when he thought about it, and even massaging his temples didn't quite help.

“Are these the memories of someone else?”

The reason why he became a Soul Ancestor wasn't because of his soulforce. It was in fact because of the planar laws and how they influenced Bai Yunfei's person. It existed within some part of Bai Yunfei's mind, so he was able to somehow recall the shattered memories of the transmigrator in him. But these memories shards were so fragmented that they were practically memory dust if anything else. A complete reconstruction was impossible, and Bai Yunfei was completely bewildered by the many things he saw, but couldn't make sense of. Just thinking about it all made Bai Yunfei feel panicked.

Within an hour, Bai Yunfei managed to suppress the most chaotic of noise in his mind. Wiping away the sweat on his forehead, he muttered, “It doesn't matter if it's fake or not. It's the same as the Upgrade Technique. They're both of an otherworldly nature, but whatever the case. I've the memories of another person in another world in my head....

“There’s a lot I don’t know and a lot more that I don’t understand. But the most important thing is....” Bai Yunfei’s face hardened at this part, “The Upgrade Technique is now in my possession. Was it because of the other person’s memories that my thoughts and actions were influenced to some degree? But if the memories of someone else combined with who I am, doesn’t this mean....”

The very notion that he might not be who ‘he’ was left Bai Yunfei with a dreaded chill and a glint of fear in his eyes....

It was unknown for just how long Bai Yunfei was left in this state of fear, but when he realized it, he immediately circulated his soulforce to calm himself down. With eyes that were glowing brightly now, he let out a long sigh of air and took in a fresh deep breath of air.

Closing his eyes, he thought back to all the memories he had of the past nineteen years he had been alive for.

He didn’t know if it was because of the fact that he became stronger, but some of his previously hazy memories were easier to recall now.

Bit by bit, everything was forming a clearer picture.

Even the rare memories of when he was five were coming back to him. His mother’s loving expression imprinted itself onto his mind along with the kindly face of his grandfather.

Then memories of when he became an orphan at the age of nine surfaced, along with the next nine dreaded years of survival....

“I must live....live with a clear mind and a clear conscience!

“There’ll be a day when my little Yunfei will grow up to be like the clouds in the sky. Drifting freely without a care in the world....”

.....

After some time, Bai Yunfei's eyes flew open. They were no longer hazy with any doubt in them. They were clear and as bright as a twinkling star.

“No matter how real or strange it is, the memories of another person should be nothing more than a very realistic saga in my head....” Raising his fist up to his eyes, Bai Yunfei clenched down hard in a sign of determination. “I’ll accept these memories of yours. But...I’ll never become who you were!

“I am me....I am Bai Yunfei!!”

If these memory fragments were placed within the mind of any other person, it might not be enough for a complete takeover of their mind, but it might very well lead to a sudden fear of a loss of identity. Either from a change in personality or nature, either of the two would be a dangerous thing to Bai Yunfei.

It was a good thing Bai Yunfei came to this realization sooner rather than later. The dangerous times were over, and he had reconfirmed his self-identity. All he needed was time to sift through the memories and absorb its ‘knowledge’ in hope that it might help supplement his own.

What Bai Yunfei didn’t know was that this reconfirmation of his identity had inadvertently dissolved a potentially disastrous crisis.

But now he was currently ‘analyzing’ the strange but fantastical information from the memories.

“What kind of soul armament is this ‘airplane’?! How ridiculous! It’s gigantic and could carry so many people!” Bai Yunfei muttered to himself. “And this ‘television’ could create moving pictures? Wow....”

“.....”

“If only I had just a little more information, I could’ve made this stuff. How great would that be!”

All of the memory fragments in his mind were completely

nonlinear and chaotic in information. Some fragments had barely anything, and other fragments were just detailing the random things to how to live a normal life. If anything were to be made sense of out of all this, it surely wouldn't be accomplished within such a short amount of time.

He'd need more time than an hour to see through the entire process.

After a long period of time, Bai Yunfei shook his head to clear his mind free of all the strange things he learned. Recounting everything from start to finish, Bai Yunfei topped off his thoughts with a sigh.

"The profits today were huge, but it'll take me a long time to fully digest everything. Becoming a Soul Ancestor, the promotion of the Upgrade Technique, a lifebound armament, and all these memories....If I can digest it all, my strength will increase exponentially!

"Well....haven't I accomplished that 'trial' anyways? Do I become a tried and true disciple now?!"

Chapter 228: The Test (Second)

The next morning. In the forests behind the courtyard belonging to the disciples of the Western Point.

The Western Point might not be the main peak of the Crafting School, but it wasn't small in comparison either. Behind the courtyards was a long blanket of trees so vast that it'd be better to describe the forest as a sea of trees. It extended so long that it reached the main peak of the Crafting School and even to where the crafting caves were. The rest of the forest was continuous and covered the entire mountain range with its trees.

Walking on the beaten path on the ground, Bai Yunfei finally arrived at a decently-sized lake several thousand meters away from the courtyards.

“Is this place far away enough from the others?”

Surveying the area, Bai Yunfei could tell that the lake was roughly a thousand meters in length. There were plenty of trees around, but when he made use of his soulsense, he couldn't sense the presence of any humans within a thousand meters.

Bai Yunfei stood at an empty side next to the lake shore with a concentrated look. Bringing out his Fire-tipped Spear, Bai Yunfei muttered, “One by one it is then....”

His eyes narrowed together in concentration. Urging his soulforce to spread all over his body, Bai Yunfei's feet pushed off against the ground so that he could practice his footwork and spearmanship.

The speed in which he delivered each form was quick, seamless, and powerful. His spear danced and fluttered through the air with such intensity that the leaves that were drifting down nearby were sent into a crazy flux from displacement. In a series of movements, Bai Yunfei's body weaved in and out irregularly so that no

spectator would even be able to guess where he'd go next.

But then all of a sudden, Bai Yunfei's body came to a screeching halt. At the same time, his spear began to flash brightly before Bai Yunfei's body grew faint.

In a single flash of light, two mirror images suddenly materialized into view right next to Bai Yunfei!

Doppelgangers!

Side by side by side, the three Bai Yunfei's stabbed forward with their spears to stab into a tree tall enough to tickle the skies and wide enough for three fully grown men to hug it.

“Thwock!”

Stabbing into the tree without resistance, the three spears began to glow whilst the hands that clutched at its shift jerked in a circular motion!

“Boom!!”

First came the explosion before a dazzling wave of fiery light washed over the entire area. All vision was lost as the elemental fire blanketed over the ground and reduced all the grass to ashes.

“Crack....crack....”

The sounds of several trees starting to creak and break under the pressure made itself known. Soon, several tremendous trees began to tilt and crash onto the ground with a heavy tremor.

As the red light scattered apart, Bai Yunfei could be seen left with the Fire-tipped Spear in his hands. By this point, the two doppelgangers were gone, and all that was left was a tremendous pile of wood that was broken here and there.

Humming as he regarded the destruction he created, Bai Yunfei stored the Fire-tipped Spear away and scratched at his chin with his hand. “The explosion is far stronger than before, but the amount of soulforce increased as well. Plus this....20 second

cooldown. What a problem, I used to be able to activate the explosion effect several times in a few seconds....”

Deep in thought, Bai Yunfei walked up to one of the still standing trees. Taking a half step back with his right foot, Bai Yunfei cocked his right hand back in preparation to punch. The muscles in that hand swelled up by a noticeable amount as soulforce filled that part of his body; and in less than ten seconds, he let loose a tremendous punch!

Eighty One Fold Fist Force!!

“Pow!”

The powerful fist smashed against the tree, eliciting a crack from the interior of the tree.

The entire tree looked as if it was quivering in the second after it was struck. With each passing instant, this quivering motion grew more and more pronounced with countless of leaves drifting to the ground.

Then, the tree began to fall over. Crashing onto the ground with an ear-deafening boom, the tree brought forth a second localized earthquake in the area.

Aside from the tree roots, the one-meter area where Bai Yunfei struck had been completely reduced to powder.

It was with a grimaced expression that Bai Yunfei pulled his quivering arm back. His face was flushed red, and his teeth were clenched tightly against each other as if trying to bite back on what pain he was feeling!

Press his left hand to his right arm, Bai Yunfei watched as a red glow of light slowly assimilate itself through his right arm.

Half an hour later, Bai Yunfei shook his right arm gingerly as if to feel how it was. Raising it up to his eye, he muttered, “How surprising, a Soul Ancestor using the Eighty One Fold Fist Force still requires so much energy! Seems like I’ll need to become a mid-

stage Soul Ancestor before I can use that move on a regular basis....but would any enemy of the same level of strength as me be able to take it if I used it?”

Shaking his hand even more to stretch it, Bai Yunfei thought, “Whatever, let’s continue with the experiments!”

Clenching his right fist again, Bai Yunfei decided to punch out. But this time, it was just a regular punch rather than one of the Overlapping Wave Arts. When his right hand flew forward, the Ardent Sun Glove on the hand immediately began to exude a bright crimson light before a brilliant flame detached itself from his fist and flew straight ahead of his hand!

“Bang!”

The fireball flew a few hundred meters forward before smashing into a boulder. As soon as the two made contact with one another, the giant boulder immediately started to fracture under the pressure and crumbled in several places.

Quirking his lips, Bai Yunfei opened up his fist to form a knife-shaped palm to chop through the air rather than a punch!

When the second flash of red light came into being, an equally red blade of fire came flying out as well from Bai Yunfei’s hand. It continued on the same trajectory as of the fireball from before and struck the same boulder from before. The power of this blade was many times stronger than the fireball, resulting in the boulder being completely split in two following the impact!

The fire blade continued onwards past the boulder and smashed into a tree within the vicinity before disappearing from sight.

After shooting the fire blade, Bai Yunfei’s right arm dropped down ahead of his chest. His palm faced outwards as he concentrated heavily on the glove on his right hand. Fire rose out from his palm, but this time, it remained on top of his palm as if trying to form something on there.

“Whoosh!”

A fireball the size of a chicken egg shot out from the center of his palm. Not even a second later, a dozen more similarly shaped fireballs shot out in a mini-barrage!

“Thump! Thump! Thump.....”

The bisected boulder that Bai Yunfei was using as target practice was immediately struck by the barrage of fireballs. And in no time at all, a wisp of gray smoke hid the boulder away from sight.

The barrage persisted for half a minute with well over a hundred fireballs being shot out before Bai Yunfei dropped his palm down.

By the time the smoke cleared away, the two halves of the boulder were no longer even visible. In its place, a crater several meters deep was all that was left....

Admiring the aftermath of the destruction he made, Bai Yunfei nodded to himself in satisfaction.

The +10 effect of the Ardent Sun Glove, a barrage of fire!

An attack like this wasn't too hard to pull off. All it required was a soul cultivator of the fire affinity to make the most out of it. But Song Lin would experience far more difficulties than Bai Yunfei if he were to try to do the same.

But Bai Yunfei could do this feat as easily as turning his hand over!

Finishing the experiment with the Ardent Sun Gloves, Bai Yunfei turned about to gaze off over the lake surface. Pensive, his right hand took out the red brick from his space ring.

“And now for the most important experiment of them all...”

Chapter 229: Renamed as the Cataclysmic Seal! (Third)

Bai Yunfei looked over the stats of the brick once more before he muttered to himself, “There’s a normal and special mode to the brick. That must mean the normal mode is the same as the +13 brick from before it became a lifebound armament, just with better chances to activate its effects....But the special mode....I wonder what that’s like....”

He had some experience when it came to the upgraded version of the brick, so he begun with sending some of his soulforce into the brick. With a single thought, he had the brick glow bright with red light in preparation for the experiment. It was as if there was some sort of power threatening to explode out from the brick, and even the space nearby the brick was distorting under the red light. With so much of the elemental fire raring to go, the brick was ablaze with its power.

Sensing the tremendous power from the brick, Bai Yunfei had the feeling that the brick felt more like his own flesh and bone rather than something inanimate. Closing his eyes, Bai Yunfei began to will the stats to appear once more in his mind.

Equipment Grade: Mid Earth (Special Mode)

Elemental Affinity: Fire, Wind

Upgrade Level: +13

Attack: 988

Additional Attack: 4430

Soul Compatibility: 100%

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to activate 'Flame Twister' and restrict mobility of another by 10% for a maximum of ten seconds.

Cooldown of 1 minute.

+12 Additional Effect: In exchange for soulforce, summon a shield made of elemental earth. The more soulforce used, the stronger the shield. The total defense of the shield cannot exceed the attack of the weapon.

(Ineffective against mind-based attacks).

+13 Additional Effect: In exchange for soulforce, expand the weapon up to ten thousand times its size. The attack will remain the same but can be controlled up to eight thousand meters away from the user.

Upgrade Requirement: 105 Soulpoints

Unique Equipment

Equipment Grade: Normal (Regular Mode)

Elemental Affinity: Earth

Upgrade Level: +13

Attack: 9

Additional Attack: 132

Soul Compatibility: 100%

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 5% chance to inflict confusion for a maximum of 3 seconds.

(If attacking the head, increase this chance to 10%.)

Cooldown of 10 seconds.

+12 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to stun the target for a maximum of 5 seconds.

(If attacking the head, increase this chance to 20%.)

Cooldown of 15 seconds.

+13 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 50% chance to hurl the target.

Cooldown of 3 seconds.

Upgrade Requirement: 105 Soulpoints

Lifting an eyebrow, Bai Yunfei asked himself, “The order of the two modes were swapped so that the stats of whichever mode its in is shown first...so this means that it’s in its special mode right now, right?”

Letting go, Bai Yunfei watched as the brick rose into the air and fly up to his eye level. With a second thought, Bai Yunfei watched as the brick flew around his head.

“Go!”

He pointed a finger towards a giant boulder a few hundred meters away from him, manipulating the brick into following his command like an obedient soldier and go flying towards his target in mind.

“Boom!!”

In an explosion of fire, sand, and stones, the boulder was reduced to powder with the utmost ease!

Nodding his head in satisfaction as the brick returned to him, Bai Yunfei realized that he didn’t even sense the power of the brick. It had been like a tap at first, but the amount of attack that was revealed after the impact was truly worthy of belonging to a mid-heaven tier soul armament.

Author Note: Please note that the brick is still considered a mid-earth tier armament. But with its additional attack, it can be considered as strong as a mid-heaven tier soul armament. That’s why Kou Changkong thought it to be a mid-heaven tier soul

armament and that's why it said in the stats that the brick was a mid-earth armament. There is no mistake here.

The most important thing was still the results of the experiment still. The 'Fire Twister' hadn't been tested yet, but that could be done later. For now, Bai Yunfei would try the +12 effect first, the 'Earthen Barrier'.

"Bzzzzz..."

The very first unexpected happening occurred then.

The brick started to vibrate from where it was in the air, but even though he wasn't touching the brick, Bai Yunfei could feel a large amount of his soulforce suddenly disappear from his body and into the center of his brick. An orange light began to spread out from the brick before immediately coming over to form a protective covering his own entire person.

"I see now..." Bai Yunfei hummed as he felt the power of the elemental earth flow out from the brick. "I can't tell how strong the barrier is, but the effect can be clearly seen. It says it can protect me from attacks that are weaker than the attack of my lifebound armament, so the defenses of the barrier is the same as the attack of the brick...."

Exerting himself even more now, Bai Yunfei urged for even more soulforce to go straight into the brick.

The more soulforce he exported, the more the barrier spread out. Soon, the barrier reached a diameter of twenty meters before coming to a stop. And with some time, the barrier started to shrink back down.

But as it shrunk, the elemental earth started to grow more concentrated in hue. By the time it was three meters wide in diameter, the orange light was already so thick that it wasn't even possible to see through it anymore. But Bai Yunfei was still heavily concentrating on the brick in front of him with his soulforce

continuing to flow into it.

As the orange light grew more and more condensed, the light looked as if it was becoming more solid than ethereal. By this point, Bai Yunfei's forehead was slick with sweat and his breathing was in erratic bursts. He was reaching his limit.

“Whew...”

After ten more seconds, Bai Yunfei finally let out a sigh in relief as he cut off the transmission of soulforce. Like shattered glass, the barrier was dispelled into several pieces before ultimately fading away from sight. Any remaining orange light was then sucked back into the brick.

When the elemental earth was sucked back into the brick, Bai Yunfei was pleasantly surprised to feel that his soulforce was being recuperated at tremendously fast speeds!

Pleased, Bai Yunfei sat down on the ground and started to focus on recovering his soulforce. The brick floated above his head with the occasional red and orange light basking him in its glow.

Roughly ten minutes later, Bai Yunfei re-opened his eyes. There was not a bit of fatigue to them now.

Looking at the brick, Bai Yunfei sighed, “This isn't enough....I already put in as much soulforce as I could into it, but the defenses were still increasing. This means that I don't have enough soulforce to bring the barrier to its maximum potential....

“Well, I've more or less understood the barrier. It's time for...the last experiment!”

+13 Additional Effect: In exchange for soulforce, expand the weapon up to ten thousand times its size. The attack will remain the same but can be controlled up to eight thousand meters away from the user.

“The description is pretty simple; it’s basically ‘gigantification’. Ten thousand times its size though....that means the brick would be at least a thousand meters in length!” Bai Yunfei calculated in his head. “But it’s pretty clear I won’t be able to do that....let’s try it out first!”

Bringing the brick in front of him, Bai Yunfei looked at it with narrowed eyes and thought, “Grow!”

At his mental command, the brick lit up in a brilliant ray of orange before expanding in size with lightning quick speed!

In practically no time at all, the brick had already grown larger than a meter in length and nearly a meter in height....perhaps it’d be better call this brick a ‘slab’ instead....

But already he could feel his soulforce dwindling away in his body.

Waving his right hand, the brick shot out to fly over the lake before coming to a stop at the center. From there, the brick lit up again and began to grow larger.

Ten meters. Twenty meters. Fifty meter. A hundred meters. Two hundred meters....

By the time Bai Yunfei’s breathing was erratic again, the brick was nearing five hundred meters in length, a hundred meters in width, and forty to fifty meters in height. It was a behemoth that floated over the lake surface and seemed to almost cover the entire world with its orange light....

Narrowing his eyes, Bai Yunfei swung his arm up to point a finger at a small mountain point a few thousand meters away.

“Whoosh....”

Now several hundred times larger than before, the brick bolted towards where Bai Yunfei pointed with the speed of a raging gale. And in a few scant seconds, it was just about to break into the mountain.

A small gleam of light streaked across Bai Yunfei's eyes, "Drop!"

"Boom!!"

At the very same time the word 'drop' came out from his mouth, the brick immediately dropped down from the skies!

There was an explosion as the surrounding thousand meters was disrupted by the ensuing earthquake. When he looked back up, the brick had disappeared into the mountain!

Narrowing his eyes again, Bai Yunfei spoke up, "Rise!"

Another explosion could be heard along with several trees flying up into the air along with something. It was the gigantic brick.

As it flew higher into the skies, the brick began its short retreat back to Bai Yunfei. At the same time, the brick was decreasing in size as it traveled so that it was back to its normal size.

With his soulforce back, Bai Yunfei began to sigh in relief. Standing up, Bai Yunfei jumped up to a nearby tree to get the higher ground.

Looking a thousand meters ahead of him where the brick had impacted, Bai Yunfei could see that there was a clear crater left there! He couldn't even see how deep the crater was from where he was!

He continued to stare at the crater for about a minute longer before Bai Yunfei decided to call it quits. Sitting down on the coarse tree branch, Bai Yunfei looked at the ordinary-looking brick in his hands with a strange look.

"Now this is not a brick....In its normal mode, the +13 effect can send people flying. In its special mode, the +13 effect....can kill a person. With strength like that, anyone could have the brick come slamming down on even the Blackwood Stronghold and eliminate it from existence....."

"It's a good thing that this has the strength of a mid-heaven tier

soul armament as my lifebound armament. I shouldn't even call this a brick....." Bai Yunfei chuckled to himself.

And then an idea hit him.

"From today onwards, your name shall be the Cataclysmic Seal!!"

Chapter 230: Elder Cousin?

Bai Yunfei stored away the Cataclysmic Seal with some joy.

“In its normal mode, we’ll call it the brick. In its special mode, we’ll call it the Cataclysmic Seal.”

Noticing that it was noon when he raised his head to the sky, Bai Yunfei leapt down from the tree to return back home.

At some point when he was running through the forests, an idea hit him out of nowhere.

The brick could easily be manipulated into flying and could also be made bigger.

Wouldn’t this mean that he could stand on it?

Wouldn’t this mean that the brick was essentially a tool he could use for flight?

But no sooner did the thought come to mind did he dismiss it, “Forget it....people can ride a sword, a blade, or a shield for flight. What use is there standing on a brick?

“I wonder how strong of a soul armament I can make now that I’m a Soul Ancestor. I have to try it out when I get the chance!”

.....

Whilst in the middle of his thoughts, Bai Yunfei detected the presence of another person, prompting him to look over to their direction with a raised eyebrow.

“Eh? Junior Bai, what brings you here?”

Just as he raised his head, Bai Yunfei could see the figure of another person. Judging from the voice of the person, it was his senior, Song Lin.

Pausing in his footsteps, Bai Yunfei answered to him, “I just finished my training and was returning to my room. What brings

senior to this place?”

“I felt an unusually large amount of soulforce in that direction a while ago, so I decided to come check it out.” Song Lin pointed in the direction behind Bai Yunfei before a surprised look overcame his face, “Wait a moment....was that you who did that, brother Bai?!”

“Uh...” Bai Yunfei chuckled in embarrassment. “If senior Song is talking about the area three thousand meters that way, then yes, that was me....”

A skeptical look shot across Song Lin’s eyes, “Were you perhaps testing out the strength of a soul armament, junior Bai?”

“Eh? You were able to tell? That’s amazing!”

“Haha, it’s nothing special. Having people come out this far to test their soul armaments are a rather common affair for our Crafting School.” Song Lin laughed.

But then he asked, “But...the noise that came with this disturbance this time was out of the norms. It’s no wonder you came out this far, even the students back on the Western Point were startled by it. Was the soul armament you were testing out your ‘lifebound armament’?”

As the eldest disciple of the Crafting School, Song Lin was naturally privy to the details of several things, such as the fact that Bai Yunfei had managed to craft a lifebound armament.

Bai Yunfei nodded, “Yes.”

Song Lin sighed in response, “Ah, that’s no wonder then....Junior Bai, you’ve only been in the school for three months, but the achievements you made so far has made me feel inferior by far!!”

It was perhaps just a trick of the mind, but Bai Yunfei could feel that there was a little bit of envy in Song Lin’s eyes?

Modestly, Bai Yunfei said, “Senior, you praise me too much. I was only able to enter Anima Realm by luck, nothing more....”

“Luck....” Song Lin shook his head, “This ‘luck’ isn’t something everyone has. Only you were able to accomplish this, that alone should say how special you are. There’s no need to be modest.”

If Song Lin was going to continue to act in such a manner, Bai Yunfei wouldn’t want to bother with arguing anymore. Changing the topic, he said, “Senior, since you don’t need to go investigate the area anymore, why not come back with me?”

“Alright then.” Song Lin nodded. Turning to walk shoulder to shoulder with Bai Yunfei, he took a few steps forward before thinking about something, “Ah, junior Bai. There was something I needed to tell you. In two days, there’ll be an assembly for the entire school. Don’t forget about it if you’re training.”

“An assembly?” Bai Yunfei quirked his eyebrows, “What is it about?”

Song Lin nodded his head in response to the first question, “The master said he had an announcement to make, but he didn’t say about what. We’ll find out when the time is right.”

“Oh, alright then. I’ll take note of it.”

But Bai Yunfei was still skeptical inside. “In two days....that’s exactly when I’ll have passed three months of stay here. Is he going to announce my formal induction as a disciple? I don’t think that’d warrant an announcement though....what else could it be?”

.....

For two days, Bai Yunfei didn’t step out from his room and instead spent his time trying to understand the new level of strength he had.

The morning after those two days, Bai Yunfei finished up his training and went off to the main point with Si Kongxian.

On the way, they came across many other students of the school. Each time they saw Bai Yunfei, the students would call out in greeting, “Senior Bai!”

Many of them admired Bai Yunfei greatly now. What he did five days ago astounded everyone and earned him respect from all around.

Being able to destroy half the cliffs where the crafting caves were was a feat that required strength none of them had. And when they were all told that Bai Yunfei had broken the bottleneck to become a Soul Ancestor, even more rumors started to circulate before people could confirm this fact to be true.

And with this announcement coincidentally being on the same day as when Bai Yunfei would reach his three-month deadline, many of the students started to connect the dots between the two....

Other than those students, Bai Yunfei was able to come across Mo Xiaoxuan, Xi Yan, Zhang Sanxian, and the other fellow students to accompany him and Si Kongxian towards the assembly.

“Eh?”

“Oh look! It’s my cousin! My cousin’s over there!”

Just as the group crossed over from the Western Point to the main point, Mo Xiaoxuan suddenly called out in a pleasantly surprised voice.

“Cousin?” Bai Yunfei repeated in confusion.

Looking up to see who he was talking to, Bai Yunfei was then even more confused, “Isn’t that....Xinyun?”

Just a few hundred meters ahead of him was a white-robed young woman currently speaking with another student.

Indeed, it was Tang Xinyun.

“Xiaoxuan, Xinyun is your cousin?” Bai Yunfei asked in

confusion, “I’ve never heard about this before.”

“Eh? I didn’t tell you before, brother Bai?” Mo Xiaoxuan asked in surprise. But then he remembered something, “Oh, I remember now. Because of all the chaos, I completely forgot to tell you about it.”

He paused here to take a breath. “I found out that same day actually. I never thought that I’d be able to come across my cousin here. My mom and her mom were actually cousins; that makes the relationship between us a little wide, but she is still my older cousin. In any case, our families are actually quite good friends, and I’ve been over to the Tangs several times now. Auntie Chu and cousin Xinyun were always the best to talk to, and they’ve always treated me well....

“Ah, right. Auntie Chu is cousin Xinyun’s mom.”

“I see now.” Bai Yunfei nodded his head. By now, Tang Xinyun had noticed the group approaching her, “Why don’t we all walk towards the assembly together then?”

.....

“Senior Tang, have you ever been to Mt. Maple just west of Mt. Crimson? The maple trees there are a beautiful sight. Each season, the leaves there are said to be beautiful when they fall and blow in the wind. Beautiful and serene; if you’ve interest, I can take you there to look. I’m sure you’ll love it....Or maybe we can go to Redfire City. There’s a great restaurant there with the most delicious cloudspring cod in the entire Great Plains Province....Oh. If not that, I also know a place in the city with the best shows....”

“Se—senior Chen....thank you for your thoughts, but I really have to focus on my training, so I can’t go anywhere right now.” Helpless against the ingratiating male in front of her, Tang Xinyun tried her best to decline his nearly-endless advances.

“Senior Tang, there’s no need to be so polite. You’ve just joined

the school, so there's plenty of things I'm sure you don't understand. Feel free to ask me any questions whenever you want. Though I have to address you as 'senior', as the rules dictate, I know a lot of things you might not. As disciples of the Crafting School, helping each other out should be expected. If there's any difficulties you might come across while training, please come find me. I became a Soul Ancestor just two days ago, so I'm sure I can teach you a few things or two from experience." The male laughed.

Though he was trying to act casual, the very last part of his sentence had been very obviously a humble brag.

This person was in fact none other than the person who was initially beaten by Bai Yunfei back on the Western Point, Chen Huanghua!

It was quite confusing at first why he was suddenly so 'close' with Tang Xinyun, but judging from what he said, Chen Huanghua was a Soul Ancestor as of two days ago!

"I don't think there'll be a need for that....I've not any problems so far in my training, and my senior is there to help me already. There's no need to trouble you, junior Chen." Her eyebrows were already furrowed together with impatience, but thanks to her gentle nature, she didn't want to outright refuse him out of fear of embarrassing him.

"It won't be any trouble at all! I—" Chen Huanghua didn't look as if he was getting the hint. But just as he was about to say something more, Tang Xinyun's eyes looked behind him and lit up when she saw several familiar faces.

"Junior Chen, I've a few friends waiting for me over there, maybe we can talk another time." Tang Xinyun cut into Chen Huanghua's words before walking past him to greet Bai Yunfei and the others.

"Yunfei, Xiaoxuan, you're here now too I see."

“Cousin!” Mo Xiaoxuan smiled in greeting. “Why are you alone? Where’s everyone else?”

“I was delayed a bit, so the other seniors went up first.” She nodded.

Then she turned to Bai Yunfei with a smile. “Yunfei, you’re alright now hopefully?”

“I’m doing fine. Thanks for your concern, Xinyun.” Bai Yunfei nodded his head in affirmation before looking around. “Junior Rui isn’t with you?” He smiled.

“Xiao Rui went with master up the mountain first. She must be at the halls already, we should hurry.”

“Yes, let’s go on th—”

“Senior Bai, we meet again.” A peculiar voice suddenly cut into Bai Yunfei’s sentence.

Surprised, Bai Yunfei turned his head back just to see Chen Huanghua’s face scrunched together in a grotesque expression. There was a look of ill-will in his eyes.

“Oh, junior Chen, it was you....” Due to his positioning, Bai Yunfei hadn’t realized that the person Tang Xinyun was talking to was actually him. Surreptitiously, Bai Yunfei turned his head to Tang Xinyun as if to ask, “Is he coming with us?”

A nearly unnoticeable shake of the head answered his silent question. Understanding her response, Bai Yunfei turned back to Chen Huanghua, “The assembly’s about to start, so there’s not much time to chat. We’ll be heading up first, junior Chen. Another time, hopefully, haha.”

And with that, Bai Yunfei and the rest of the group walked past Chen Huanghua up the mountain.

Moving to Tang Xinyun’s side, Mo Xiaoxuan whispered, “Cousin, I’m about to go to Redfire City to relax for a few days, do you want

to go together?”

Though surprised by the question, Tang Xinyun agreed after thinking about it. “Alright. I was planning on buying a few things anyways.”

“Do you want to come too, brother Bai?” Mo Xiaoxuan asked right after. “I already promised Zhong Xuhao and the others. Senior Ye is coming too, why don’t we all go together?”

“Why not?” Bai Yunfei agreed after careful consideration. “I’ll be more than happy to go.”

And so the group continued on the rest of the way with a merry laugh....

Chapter 231: A Small Test of Blades

“.....”

A series of emotions ran through Chen Huanghua's face as he watched Bai Yunfei walk shoulder to shoulder with Tang Xinyun. These emotions continued to fluctuate over his face for several seconds before finally, he exclaimed, “Senior Bai, one moment!”

His outburst caused Bai Yunfei's foot to stop mid-stride. Turning his head back, Bai Yunfei asked, “Is there a problem, junior Chen?”

Though Chen Huanghua hesitated to reply to him right away, he managed to cup his hands in salute. “I've learned a lot since your guidance last time. Now that I've become stronger now, I wish to compare notes with senior Bai again!”

“Ahhh? You still want to fight?” Bai Yunfei cried out in exasperation. It really befuddled Bai Yunfei why there was a need, so he decided to refuse the request. “The assembly's about to start, so forget about it for now.”

“It'll just be a quick comparison of notes; nothing too long.” Chen Huanghua persisted. “Since senior Tang is here, it'll be a fair and impartial match.

“What's wrong, are you afraid of losing now that I've become a Soul Ancestor, senior Bai?”

“Oh? You've become a Soul ancestor?” This bit of information was new to Bai Yunfei, but he was mainly confused why Chen Huanghua would suddenly bring Tang Xinyun into this conversation.

Turning his eyes to meet Tang Xinyun's helpless eyes, Bai Yunfei turned back just in time to see the hostile and jealous eyes of Chen Huanghua.

Ah. Now he understood what was going on.

Chen Huanghua was a hopeful suitor of Tang Xinyun, and Bai Yunfei was an obstacle in his way, was that it?

“What’s wrong, are you unwilling now, senior Bai?”

It was in Chen Huanghua’s expectations that Bai Yunfei would back down from the challenge after hearing that he was a Soul Ancestor, but instead, Bai Yunfei looked as if he was raring to go now.

Chen Huanghua didn’t want to provoke Bai Yunfei too much in all honesty. After his first loss at the hands of Bai Yunfei, the shame of losing had delivered a massive blow to his emotions. As soon as he got back to his room, Chen Huanghua had shut himself off to dedicate himself to his training for two whole months.

Somehow, he managed to break the bottleneck and become a Soul Ancestor. With this increase in strength, he was fully confident that he could win against Bai Yunfei now, should they fight again.

Thus began the same cycle where he looked down on Bai Yunfei. With jealousy being thrown into the mix, Chen Huanghua’s mind was far too intent on trying to deliver the winning blow to Bai Yunfei and win back the face he had lost two months prior.

It took him several days to consolidate his strength after becoming a Soul Ancestor. In fact, he had only just come out from his seclusion yesterday and so news of what Bai Yunfei did to the cliffs or his increase in strength didn’t reach him yet.

“Alright then, let’s fight.” Bai Yunfei shrugged helplessly. “Tough luck for you.” He thought. “First I used you to show my strength, and now I’ll be using you to test my strength. You won’t be getting any mercy from me.”

It was at that moment another person’s voice suddenly called out as well.

“Bai Yunfei! We finally meet again! Fight me, I want to prove to

our junior that I'm stronger than you!"

Whirling his head around again, Bai Yunfei saw yet another person that he hadn't seen for some time come towards him.

It was Fei Nian.

He frowned but didn't bother to say anything more. "You want to fight me too? Well then, line up!"

"What?" Fei Nian hadn't expected that response. Before he could even say anything though, Mo Xiaoxuan ran up to him and quickly explained the situation.

"Oh? They're going to fight?" Fei Nian remarked. Regarding the two figures in front of him, the male thought to himself with a calculative glare, "That's one of the disciples from the Western Point, Chen Huanghua. I heard that he became a Soul Ancestor a few days ago. It might've been an accident, but he's become quite popular amongst the inner school now.

"Good, I'll let him be the first to see how strong Bai Yunfei is."

Fei Nian knew that Bai Yunfei was a Soul Ancestor, but the only reason he challenged him was because he too was a Soul Ancestor now!

His situation was different than to Chen Huanghua. Breaking through wasn't even a challenge for him since he had been lingering on the edge of both realms for the longest of times.

It wasn't because he couldn't, it was because he didn't want to.

There was a reason for that; his soulbound armament. Every disciple of the school knew that whenever their strengths increased, there would be a valuable chance of having their soul compatibility with their soulbound armament increase. It was something that required plenty of time to prepare so that the greatest amount of improvement could be had.

Reasons like this were why soul cultivators were different than to

the students of the Crafting School. Any soul cultivator would be anxious to breakthrough as quickly as they can. But the students of the Crafting School would deliberately stall the advancement and wait for the best time to do so. A proper preparation was the key to success.

Only the Crafting School would abide by this though.

Because of his advancement, Fei Nian's strength had more than doubled. His soulbound armament was nowhere as weak as it was before, and he was now more confident of his strength. Even if he was surprised by Bai Yunfei's past achievements, Fei Nian was sure that his own experiences would allow for him to defeat Bai Yunfei.

This was what confidence meant to a disciple like him.

There was a problem, however. He didn't know that Bai Yunfei had managed to craft a lifebound armament.

.....

And so now, Bai Yunfei and Chen Huanghua stood ten meters apart from one another on the boundary between the Western Point and the main mountain point. Whilst Chen Huanghua looked extremely focused on his enemy, Bai Yunfei looked rather carefree and completely devoid of battle spirit as if waiting for his opponent to make the first move.

Chen Huanghua carefully judged the situation in front of him. While he had confidence in himself, being careless wasn't something he was planning on being. The last time he was 'careless' was when Bai Yunfei's flaming diggers and doppelgangers defeated him in one fell stroke.

He wouldn't fall for the same trick twice.

The Rock Slicer was called out with a faint ringing of the blade at the same time Chen Huanghua revealed his strength as a Soul Ancestor. Under the overwhelming soulforce, all the other students watching the scene took several unconscious steps

backward as if in fear of him.

Since he was confronting Bai Yunfei, Chen Huanghua was quick to realize that the unrealistically long red spear of Bai Yunfei wasn't even out.

Taking this to be a sign of his enemy underestimating him, Chen Huanghua snorted. Now he was even more confident that his plan of 'attacking first for the upper hand' would be the best idea in mind.

Leaping at Bai Yunfei, his long sword was immediately swung down in a vertical chop!

It was the same opening move as his first fight, but the Rock Slicer this time was faster and stronger than before.

But even though it was a powerful stroke, Bai Yunfei wasn't even resisting!!

Several of the students watching the fight couldn't help but scream out in fear at the sight of the sword coming closer to Bai Yunfei. Even Chen Huanghua himself was starting to wonder if he should pull back his sword when Bai Yunfei's right hand shook once.

In a flash of dazzling orange light, an object appeared right above Bai Yunfei's head; and in the next second, a bright orange barrier suddenly covered Bai Yunfei's body.

"Clank!!"

Resonating upon impact, Chen Huanghua's Rock Slicer was stopped immediately by the Cataclysmic Seal. It wouldn't even budge!

The blowback had been severe for him, however.

Such was the recoil that Chen Huanghua's body was actually thrown to the ground in shock.

"What the fuck!!"

Roaring aloud, Chen Huanghua leaped up with his Rock Slicer ready to strike again!

“Clank!”

Though the barrier rippled from where the sword struck it, it remained standing while the Rock Slicer was rebounded backward.

“Clank clank clank!”

Chen Huanghua swung his sword thrice in quick succession, but to no avail!!

He swung again for another dozen attempts, but none of them had been able to overcome the Cataclysmic Seal's defenses!

Still standing completely at ease, Bai Yunfei raised a hand up to look at the Cataclysmic Seal protecting him from above with a pleased expression.

A smirk started to grow on his lips as he watched Chen Huanghua be thrown back several meters. Speaking aloud, Bai Yunfei stated, “Junior Chen, it's my turn to attack. Careful now!”

Though he spoke about wanting to attack, his body gave no indication of moving. Instead, his right hand lifted upwards as if conducting something. In accordance with his movement, the Cataclysmic Seal shook once as the barrier was dispelled. The elemental earth that had been covering the brick was engulfed by elemental fire at his command and shot off towards Chen Huanghua when Bai Yunfei pointed his finger.

Chen Huanghua was startled by this action, but he moved swiftly to bring his sword up to block the Cataclysmic Seal.

It was expected for the two armaments to clash against one another.

But what really happened was that right before contact, Bai Yunfei's finger twitched slightly, as if operating an invisible string connecting to the Cataclysmic Seal. In response to the twitches of

his finger, the Cataclysmic Seal shifted in its trajectory and streaked past the Rock Slicer!

Startled as he was still, Chen Huanghua managed to pull up his sword so that the hilt clashed with the Cataclysmic Seal instead of his body.

“Pow!”

When hilt met brick, the brick was repelled backward several meters while Chen Huanghua himself was sent back three steps.

“What strength!”

It went without saying that Chen Huanghua was surprised by the power behind the brick, but what he didn't know was that Bai Yunfei was afraid of harming him so he had purposely weakened the strength behind it.

No sooner did he manage to stabilize his footing did he realize that the red light of a soul armament was already encircled around him. Already was the light reaching behind him in an attempt to strike at his back!

Turning his blade so that it'd protect his back, Chen Huanghua managed to hear the successful sound of a clash before he was flung forward two steps.

“Clang! Clang! Clang....”

In bouts of twos and threes, Bai Yunfei attacked Chen Huanghua while Chen Huanghua did his best to defend.

Compared to the first fight he had with Bai Yunfei, Chen Huanghua was in a drastically worse shape this time. The Cataclysmic Seal floated around in the air like a butterfly while expertly weaving in and out to attack at the holes in his defenses.

Each time, Chen Huanghua would manage to block the brick, but he was in a bad shape and was in no way capable of retaliating.

“Clang!”

Swinging down again, Chen Huanghua managed to stop the Cataclysmic Seal from hitting him again.

But just moments after the two armaments separated from one another, the Cataclysmic Seal suddenly let loose an eye-dazzling amount of light before a rope made of fire immediately wrapped itself around his arm before then the rest of his entire body!

Seeing that Chen Huanghua was caught, Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up with excitement.

+10 Additional Effect of the Cataclysmic Seal, Flame Twister!

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to activate 'Flame Twister' and restrict mobility of another by 10% for a maximum of ten seconds.
Cooldown of 1 minute.

“Whoosh!!”

Chen Huanghua hadn't even the time to properly react to the fire around him before the Cataclysmic Seal swooped down again like a speeding fireball onto his body!

Shifting his feet, Chen Huanghua tried his best to dodge, only to realize that his body wasn't reacting to his thoughts! Both of his feet dug into the ground as he wanted, but the speed in which he was doing so was just slightly slower than usual!

Raising his giant sword, Chen Huanghua managed to successfully block the brick. There was a difference to the collision this time, however; the strength behind the brick was far stronger than before. This meant that Chen Huanghua wasn't able to maintain his ground and was instead flung off his feet.

“Whoosh!”

The Rock Slicer was embedded into the ground so that Chen Huanghua would have a chance to chain himself to the ground. But

even before he could pull out his sword and get back onto his feet, his entire body suddenly went rigid as if afraid of making any sudden movements.

A single greenish glow from the sheen of a blade was resting upon the left side of his neck with an incredibly chilling aura.

The Crescent Moon Blades!!

Ten meters away, Bai Yunfei stood there with an identical looking blade in his right hand. The Cataclysmic Seal was right above his head, and Bai Yunfei himself was smiling at Chen Huanghua.

Chapter 232: You Let Me Win

Conducting the Crescent Moon Blade he had in his right arm, Bai Yunfei called over the other one that had been pressed against Chen Huanghua's neck back to him.

With a clicking sound, the two swords were conjoined together.

Waving his hand, the blade disappeared back into his space ring along with the Cataclysmic Seal.

From start to finish, not a single person had been able to tell it had been a brick that was attacking Chen Huanghua due to the light around it.

And from start to finish, Bai Yunfei didn't even take a single step away from where he started!

Nodding his head to the motionless Chen Huanghua, Bai Yunfei said, "Junior Chen, thank you for letting me win."

"....."

The audience was deathly silent. Everyone could only stare as Bai Yunfei walked back over to where Tang Xinyun and the others were with wide-opened mouths.

What....what happened just now?

Chen Huanghua was a well-known figure and Soul Ancestor of the Western Point.

But despite that, he was defeated ever so soundly!!

It was beyond what many of them thought was possible, and many of them could still hardly believe what happened right in front of them.

.....

Back amongst his friends, Bai Yunfei turned to look to Fei Nian on the left, "Senior Fei Nian, do you still wish to fight?"

“Uhm....” Realizing he was being talked to, Fei Nian chuckled in response. “Haha, actually, junior Bai, the assembly’s about to start, so we should get going....In any case, I just remembered something I needed to talk to a senior about. So junior Bai, I’ll be going first!”

Bai Yunfei hadn’t even had time to reply to him before Fei Nian took off.

“.....”

Though surprised at Fei Nian’s actions, Bai Yunfei shooked his head. “Well then, let’s go....” He spoke to the others.

It was only after Bai Yunfei left that the other students that had been watching the fight finally started to talk to one another about what they had just watched.

“That was ridiculous! Did senior Bai really become a Soul Ancestor like the rumors said? He felt more like a late-stage Soul Ancestor rather than an early-stage one!”

“Yeah! Senior Chen was an early-stage Soul Ancestor, but he wasn’t even able to hit him once before he was defeated!”

“What kind of soul armament was he controlling? How was it that strong? Aren’t soul armaments that can be controlled independently like that something only Soul Exalts can make?”

“I bet it’s because of the soul armament.”

“The last time they fought, both of them were late-stage Soul Sprites. Senior Bai had a bracer on his right arm and a bright-red spear to defeat senior Chen. This time, he was using two different soul armaments for the same exact results. Hell, this time he was even faster....”

“No wonder the headmaster made an exception to turn him into a disciple; his strength is beyond normal....”

“.....”

These students continued to talk to one another as they traveled

up the mountains. One by one, they explained to any other students who hadn't been there about the battles they saw. When they listened, the new students would all gasp and lament in sadness that they didn't come earlier to come witness this 'spectacular' fight.

With everyone leaving one by one, only Chen Huanghua was left standing there. Shock, confusion, anger, reluctance....all sorts of emotions ran through his head, and it felt as if he was dreaming.

But the wind that blew past him was more than enough to tell him he was in no dream. Sighing, he stored away his Rock Slicer and slowly stalked up the mountain with a bowed head.

.....

"Brother Bai....you're amazing! Senior Chen was a Soul Ancestor, but you managed to beat him so easily, how'd you do it? What kind of soul armament was that—it was amazing!"

Throughout the way up, Mo Xiaoxuan talked constantly with Si Kongxian and the others about what they saw and kept addressing Bai Yunfei with a worshipful gaze.

Though the rest of the group was the same in that regard.

Smiling, Bai Yunfei said, "Which one are you saying, my soul armament is amazing or me?"

"Hehe, both of course..."

"What is there to be amazing about? As long as you train hard, there'll come a day where you'll be able to do the same thing." Bai Yunfei shook his head. Turning to Tang Xinyun at his side, he asked after a moment, "Ah, Xinyun, are you and Chen Huanghua..."

Knowing what Bai Yunfei was about to ask, Tang Xinyun shook her head to reply, "He and I don't know each other that well. When I first joined the Crafting School, he was in charge at the time. He was nice to me before, but when I said I came for an

apprenticeship, he said that he'd help me. But I met the master shortly afterward and was led away up to the mountains. We met several times later, but I didn't think that he'd try and ask me out here...."

"Oh, I see now." Bai Yunfei nodded his head. Everyone had their own idea of beauty, and it seemed that Tang Xinyun was what Chen Huanghua liked. Presumably, this increase in strength was what led to his newly-found courage. Tang Xinyun on the other hand, cared not for his attention, and so Chen Huanghua had pinned the blame onto Bai Yunfei.

"Pfft, senior Chen might be a strong member in the inner school, but he's not a good match for my cousin." Mo Xiaoxuan tutted before then adding on one final line, "Brother Bai would be a much better match."

"Ah...." Bai Yunfei didn't know what to say in response to that. "Just say your cousin is too good for him, what are you doing saying something that could cause a misunderstanding?"

Sure enough, Si Kongxian and the others all nodded their heads in agreement and smiled knowingly towards Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun.

"Xiaoxuan, what are you saying!" Even though it was said in jest, Tang Xinyun was still a woman. Blushing as she gave Mo Xiaoxuan a small glare, Tang Xinyun tried her best to avoid Bai Yunfei's eyes.

Bai Yunfei coughed once before going silent....

.....

With time, the entire group managed to make it to the massive halls on the main point of the Crafting School.

For as far as the eyes could see, at least six thousand people were gathered there in smaller groups as they talked to one another.

Mo Xiaoxuan and several others moved to talk with several

groups they were familiar with while Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun went straight into the halls.

As they entered the halls, the two of them managed to come across Ling Yan who was in the middle of walking out from the halls. “Junior Bai, junior Tang, you’re both here I see. Come on in, the master and elders are inside. They’ll be here to make an announcement soon enough.”

“Understood.” Bai Yunfei nodded before walking past Ling Yan to walk further into the halls.

The headmaster Kou Changkong, the elders, and surprisingly enough, even the previous headmaster Zi Jin was there. Casting a quick glance around, Bai Yunfei could see that the other disciples were gathered there. Even Huangfu Rui could be seen with a snowy-white pig bored out of her mind as she stood next to Cang Yu. When she saw Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun come in, her face lit up with joy; though she stuck out her tongue to Bai Yunfei.

Standing towards the right was Fei Nian. When his and Bai Yunfei’s eyes met, Fei Nian turned away in embarrassment and deep thought.

“Yunfei pays his respects to the master, previous headmaster, and the elders.” Bai Yunfei bowed to the elders in front of him.

Right by his side, Tang Xinyun did the same thing.

“Ah, Yunfei, come here. I’ve something I’d like to ask.”

The previous headmaster Zi Jin smiled as he beckoned towards Bai Yunfei. In his eyes were the kindly sentiments of an elder looking after his precious students; an expression that Bai Yunfei felt humbled by, so he hurried on over to him.

Tang Xinyun moved to stand next to the third elder along with her other students after Cang Yu beckoned for her.

Soon enough, Huangfu Rui managed to squirm her way out from Cang Yu’s grasp to talk coyishly with Tang Xinyun.

“Yunfei, have you felt unwell since two days ago?” Zi Jin asked as Bai Yunfei approached him.

“Eh?” Surprised by the question, Bai Yunfei replied, “Not at all. Your student has been working on understanding my strength, so I feel much better than before.”

“That’s good then...” Zi Jin nodded, “Have you gotten familiar with your lifebound armament?”

“On a certain level so far. But....I can’t use its entire power with my current level of strength so far....”

“There’s no need to worry. Your training has only just begun. There’s so much more potential you’ve yet to unlock. With your talent, I’m sure that as long as you focus, you’ll be able to stand above the clouds!”

With such high praises from the previous headmaster, Bai Yunfei felt extremely motivated. “Thank you for your concern, senior. I, Yunfei, will work hard so I won’t disappoint you!”

“Haha, good. Very good....” Zi Jin nodded.

The other disciples who saw how Zi Jin was treating Bai Yunfei were all jealous.

At this moment, Ling Yan came back from the outside and stopped in front of Kou Changkong, “Master, all of the students have gathered.”

Nodding to Zi Jin, Kou Changkong said, “Very well, we should head out as well then.”

.....

Chapter 233: Rising Up in the Hierarchy!

The entire exterior of the halls was almost completely black. For as far as the eyes could see, an ocean of people was gathered here; possibly almost ten thousand people perhaps.

The entirety of the Crafting School was gathered here in small rows. Although there was idle chit-chat from several places, there wasn't a loud commotion. Everyone was waiting for something.

"The headmaster is here!"

"The headmaster, the elders, and even all of the disciples! What a grand assembly this is, I wonder what they're going to talk about?"

"Look, the one walking next to senior Ling Yan, that's Bai Yunfei!"

"So he's the one who blew up half the crafting cliffs? He's also the only one who became a disciple due to an exception; you think this assembly has something to do with him?"

"Probably not, I guess. Even if he became a disciple by exception, there's no need to have an assembly like this. Although, today is the same day as when Bai Yunfei joined the Crafting School three months ago, so it might just be too...."

"I heard that he fought with senior Chen Huanghua just a while ago and completely beat him...."

"What? Wasn't senior Chen Huanghua a Soul Ancestor? How'd he lose then..."

"It's true. I saw it myself! Senior Bai is incredibly strong and completely overwhelmed senior Chen Huanghua. The battle was over with literally the raising of his hand...."

"Eh? Who's that old man next to the headmaster? I've never seen him before; even all the elders are behind him..."

"You only just entered the school, so of course you don't know

him. That's the previous headmaster of the school, Zi Jin. He went into seclusion before passing his title on."

"He's someone from the previous generation?! Doesn't he look a little too young for someone that old?"

"What rubbish. For the stronger soul cultivators, they could look like they're in their middle-ages even if they're actually over a hundred years old. What's so weird about that?"

"Wasn't the previous headmaster supposed to stay away from affairs of the school? What's he doing attending this assembly, and why?"

"How should I know...."

"....."

Hurried whispers ran amuck the entire sea of people, but when Kou Changkong and the others came to a stop, the discussions immediately came to a stop throughout the entire place.

This would be the very first time Bai Yunfei was faced with so many people. Having so many people point and whisper to one another about him, Bai Yunfei felt slightly uneasy, but he managed to keep his head high and his expression solemn.

There was a giant stone pedestal in front of the halls. Generally, it was meant for the inner school to fight one another, but Kou Changkong and the others walked right on top of it while Song Lin brought the other disciples to stand in front of the pedestal.

This was an assembly of the entire Crafting School, not some sort of rewards ceremony for some sort of company. Thus, there was no need for the elders to say anything or to even have a student play the part of a host.

Instead, Kou Changkong looked over the ten thousand people and spoke in a nice and clear voice, "We've gathered you all here today for a single announcement!"

His voice wasn't magnified, but every single student was able to hear what he was saying loud and clear since it was silent enough for even a needle to be heard if it was dropped.

He turned to look in the direction of Bai Yunfei, "Yunfei, come up here!"

"So it really had to do with me!" Bai Yunfei's heart skipped a beat. Even though he was surprised, he didn't dare delay the assembly and swiftly moved to step onto the pedestal.

No sooner did Bai Yunfei reach Kou Changkong did Bai Yunfei speak out meekly, "Master...."

However, Kou Changkong shook his head and immediately said something that caused Bai Yunfei's face to go pale with fright!

"Don't call me master."

Like a bombshell going off in his head, all other thoughts were immediately purged from his head, "'Don't call me master'?! What does that mean? Hold on...does he mean....I'm no longer his disciple?!" As the thought occurred to him, Bai Yunfei felt a feeling of dread sink down from his heart, leaving him at a loss for words.

What he didn't realize was that all of the elders looking at him from behind were all filled with a smiling expression.

Without leaving too much time in between his words, Kou Changkong pointed a finger to Bai Yunfei and then looked down to the rest of the students. "As I said just now, the reason for this assembly is to give one single announcement. And that announcement is....

"The newly-entered student that is Bai Yunfei. Starting from today, you will be the fourth disciple to the previous headmaster, Zi Jin!"

"....."

"....."

For three whole seconds, the entire halls were silent.

Then, everyone exploded into wild discussion.

“What? Did I hear that right? Did the headmaster say something? Who’s the new disciple?”

“I heard them say that the previous headmaster Zi Jin will take on a new disciple. Is that right?”

“I heard the same. Unless the headmaster slipped up, Bai Yunfei is the new disciple, making him a junior of the same generation of the headmaster....”

“Isn’t that just a bit too much?! The previous headmaster, who was in seclusion for so many years, is finally taking in a new disciple?!”

“Senior Bai...no wait. We’re going to have to call him ‘teacher Bai’!”

“What kind of background does he have to be taken in as the disciple of the previous headmaster....”

“.....”

All of the disciples were shocked as well, Song Lin included. Even he could hardly believe his ears on what he heard, so it was clear to see that he wasn’t aware of what the announcement was going to be on.

Kou Changkong smiled as he looked to Bai Yunfei, “Yunfei, from today onwards, there is no need for you to call me master. Age is no factor in seniority; we will be fellow disciples in the future. Don’t think this to be too awkward; I haven’t even accepted you as a formal disciple before this. You’ve approval of master due to your excellent achievements. So be sure to familiarize yourself with your new status.”

“I...this....” Bai Yunfei was still having an incredibly hard time trying to respond to this situation, and Kou Changkong wasn’t

making it easier for him to respond either.

From the side, Huangfu Nan quirked his lips when he saw how stunned Bai Yunfei was, “Hmph! Youngster Bai, you walk the path of fortune! In just three months, you went from being a new student to a peer of my generation! What are you waiting for, the master is waiting for your response; hurry up and call him your master!”

This was what it took for Bai Yunfei to snap back to reality.

Seeing Zi Jin smile at him, Bai Yunfei bowed with all the haste he had and spoke, “Di—disciple Yunfei pays his respects to....to the master!!”

Zi Jin nodded his head in satisfaction. “Very good. Yunfei, from today onwards, you will be my disciple. I will teach you all that I know, don’t let me down....”

“Yes, master!!”

Bai Yunfei responded with great clarity. From the despair he was just feeling a minute ago, he was now feeling a great deal of elation. In his mind, he could only think of one thing....

“The cycles of life spins far too fast, how exciting is this!!”

.....

And so the assembly was put to an end after the announcement.

Many of the students still couldn’t quite understand what was happening and started to talk to one another about it as they left. Zi Jin told Bai Yunfei to go see him early tomorrow at the Northern Point before he retreated with the elders back into the halls, leaving Bai Yunfei to leave with his friends.

Before long, the entire hall was only left with the people Bai Yunfei was acquaintance with.

This included Tang Xinyun, Ye Zhiqiu, Zhong Xuhao, and several others who crowded around Bai Yunfei.

“Bro—no...seni—no...master Bai...?” Mo Xiaoxuan was at a loss on how to refer to Bai Yunfei and so he stumbled over his greeting at first.

“For...forget about that.” Bai Yunfei waved his hand, “Just hearing that makes me nervous. Call me what you’ve been calling me by before. We shouldn’t pay too much attention to this.”

“Really? We can keep calling you brother Bai?” Zhong Xuhao exclaimed in excitement.

“Yes.” Bai Yunfei nodded with a smile.

“Whew....that’s good...” Mo Xiaoxuan sighed in exaggeration. “I was scared that you wouldn’t be the same brother Bai as before! You’ve become someone of the ‘previous generation’, how should we react to that, hah!”

“It’s only a matter of hierarchy. We’re still friends as like before.”

Bai Yunfei turned to Tang Xinyun, “Xinyun, I won’t have you call me master Bai at the very least, haha...”

“.....” Tang Xinyun said nothing. In the past, she had once joked about Bai Yunfei calling her senior, but now, she had been actually afraid that Bai Yunfei would have her call him ‘master’.

Song Lin, Xiao Nanren, and even Ling Yan came up to approach Bai Yunfei by this point. Hesitantly, Song Lin was the first to speak, “Master.....master Bai....”

It seemed like even they were having a hard time wrapping their heads around the new development.

“Senior, please for the love of everything don’t call me master....” Bai Yunfei waved his hand. “Please call me Yunfei as you’ve always had. There’s no need for this strange new practice.”

Song Lin let out a sigh of relief in secret, “Haha, then please don’t call me senior anymore....”

Thinking about it, Bai Yunfei suggested, “Then I’ll call you brother Song, brother Xiao, and brother Ling. You’re all older than me, so calling you older brothers should be adequate.”

“That works. Let’s do that in the future then.”

Song Lin and the other two agreed. After all, addressing a person they had always called as ‘juniors’ a ‘master’ was extremely awkward.

Chapter 234: The Legend of the Alchemy School

For the entirety of his walk back to the Western Point, Bai Yunfei was in a daze. He simply couldn't believe what had happened to him today.

Was he....really now a disciple to the previous headmaster, Zi Jin? A fellow junior with the current headmaster?

Despite that, elation ran rampant through his head. Him; a disciple of the previous headmaster! Zi Jin was without a doubt a 'master' far worthy of being called a master than Kou Changkong. Even if Zi Jin had retreated for a long time, he was still far more knowledgeable than Kou Changkong!

As the headmaster of the school, Kou Changkong would need to spend plenty of time on the management of the school. He also had plenty of disciples so time spent per disciple would be much shorter for teaching purposes.

But Zi Jin was different. He had been in seclusion in the Northern Point and wasn't involved in the affairs of the school. There wasn't a need to teach the first disciple, Kou Changkong, the second disciple had no part in this, and the third disciple Jiang Fan was currently abroad and gaining some experience. This left Bai Yunfei as the only one that'd need to be taught the art of crafting!

What Bai Yunfei could learn wasn't just limited to the art of crafting either. Zi Jin was a Soul King, meaning that he could impart several bits of knowledge on training to Bai Yunfei.

"I have to go to the Northern Point tomorrow...." Bai Yunfei muttered to himself on top of his bed. "I'm a Soul Ancestor now, I wonder what I'll learn from master? Would I be able to craft earth tier soul armaments now?"

"I should prepare myself to learn tomorrow!"

The next morning at the right half of the Northern Point.

A small bamboo forest adorned the landscape here. And within this forest was a simple-looking pavilion. But behind this pavilion was a tremendously large courtyard.

Two people could be seen standing in the courtyard; an elderly man and a young man. It was Bai Yunfei and Zi Jin.

Bai Yunfei had been demonstrating his proficiency with the Secrets of Firebending and the newfound strength he had as a Soul Ancestor for Zi Jin, who nodded in satisfaction. “Very good, Yunfei. You’ve managed to do this well with the Secrets of Firebending in such a short amount of time. That much shows how much you’ve understood the mysteries behind the elemental fire. If you were the average soul cultivator, this level of understanding would require the strength of a mid-stage Soul Ancestor....”

“Master praises me too much....In all honesty, master. There was a....a problem when I became a Soul Sprite. It’s only because of the fireseed spirit mushroom I ate that I’m able to understand the elemental fire a lot better than others....” Bai Yunfei spoke honestly to Zi Jin.

“Oh? A fireseed spirit mushroom? You had such a precious item to help you?” Zi Jin remarked. “Was this given to you by Ge Yiyun of the Fate School?” He questioned.

Bai Yunfei was startled by the question, leaving Zi Jin to smile, “There’s no need for you to be surprised. When you joined our Crafting School, we made sure to look into your background. We know all about your adventures in the Azure Cloud Province. It was a required investigation, so I hope you won’t think too much about it.”

Bai Yunfei knew that there wasn’t a point in being unhappy about this. Just thinking about it, he knew that it was because of Hong Yin’s assistance with the fireseed spirit mushroom that he was able to get over the initial problem. Of course, the only reason

why there was a problem to begin with was because of his excessive usage of the Upgrade Technique.

“Ah, so it was Hong Yin who helped you. That makes sense....an item like that is easily findable in the Soulbeast Forest.” Zi Jin nodded his head sagely without pressing the question anymore.

Suddenly realizing something, Bai Yunfei shook his hand so that he took out the spirit mushroom from the two killer brothers.

“Master, your student came across this on my travels, I’m not too familiar with it, however. Perhaps master knows....”

Zi Jin’s eyebrows rose up on his face, “A wind spirit mushroom? Those are exceedingly rare as well. This one, in particular, isn’t the same as the fireseed spirit mushroom you ate, but it’s nearing a thousand years in age at the least. If eaten, this’ll definitely provide a good boost to your training. As a medicinal herb, it has plenty of applications. However, only a soul cultivator with the wind affinity would have the greatest benefits when using it. Any other soul cultivator would only see a limited effect.”

“Eaten? You can eat it?” Bai Yunfei asked.

Zi Jin nodded, “For precious herbs like these, many people eat them directly. There are a few other simplistic ways to compound it. Unfortunately, the once glorious Alchemy School was hurt heavily from the Unifying War two thousand years ago. From there, they faded away into the annals of history. It’s been a thousand years since their last appearance.”

“The Alchemy School? Two thousand years ago?” Bai Yunfei asked, “Unifying War? Is that the one...”

“Correct. It was the war that brought the Tianhun Continent together.” Zi Jin answered Bai Yunfei’s question with a smile. “Over two thousand two hundred years ago, the continent was in chaos. Countries dominated every aspect of the continent, and warlords vying for supremacy lurked every corner. A single person

rose to prominence to lead a small kingdom into battle. Even the greatest empire at the time, the Daqin Empire, was completely engulfed by them. In the end, he managed to unify the continent and named it the Tianhun Continent!

“At that time, that man was the strongest. None other could hope to match him, and so he was known to be the strongest man in history!

“This man was the founding empire of the Tianhun Continent, Wu Tianhun!”

Zi Jin paused here to take a breath. “The Alchemy School as the name implied, was a school that specialized in refining all sorts of medicines. Their ability to concoct pills robbed away the world of its special nature and was magical beyond all else. And if made with precious herbs by a skilled alchemist, their effects would multiply many times over! They could make pills for every situation, and some of them were said to be capable of reviving the dead or allow a person to breakthrough a bottleneck with ease!

“Of course, with such an existence, there would be plenty of parties that’d want ties to them. Ultimately, these ties became knots, and knots led to strangulation. The Alchemy School were ruined in the end, and legends say that the last headmaster of the school destroyed all knowledge they had on pillmaking. The remaining students all ingested a sacrificial pill that killed their enemies when they themselves died!

“In the end, only a few remaining students were able to flee from the school. They tried to reform the school in hopes of reforming their past glory, but it was to no use. They faded away from the world of soul cultivators along with their arts....

“There have been several former students that left behind their secrets on the art. And with each appearance, the entire continent would fight amongst each other for it....Five hundred years ago, there was a rumor of a pill that could help one breakthrough to

become a Soul Emperor spread around the continent. This led to several schools getting involved for the pill, including the Soul Refining School, the Wind Lightning School, and the Five Elements schools were involved, resulting in the loss of a Soul King for each party! The other schools in the conflict were hurt as well. Even our Crafting School was pulled into the mess....In the end, the Tianhun School stepped into the affair and stabilized the issue. No one knows where the pill was left to, or even if the pill is real or not....”

Zi Jin stopped here; it seemed as if talking about this subject had left the man with some sorrows. A barely inaudible sigh escaped from his lips before Zi Jin smiled and waited for Bai Yunfei to digest the information.

There was a misty look in Bai Yunfei’s eyes as if he was savoring what Zi Jin had explained to him in his mind.

Never did he think that the wind spirit mushroom he had in his hand would have such a startling ‘history’ tied to it.

What Zi Jin said wasn’t some sort of ‘secret’. But Bai Yunfei hadn’t a good understanding of the world of soul cultivators, so when he heard this story, he was very shocked.

“A powerful man with no equal, unification of the continent....the Alchemy School, pillmaking, and the death of several Soul Kings....” Bai Yunfei thought to himself before finally coming back to his senses. He didn’t know why, but the story Zi Jin just told him had gotten his blood pumping.

Noticing that Bai Yunfei was fully aware now, he smiled, “Well then. The stories and matters of the world of soul cultivators will come to you with time. You should work on getting stronger. When you do, you’ll be able to experience the vastness of the Tianhun Continent. Grow strong, travel, and experience what treasures the world has to offer you...”

Putting away his thoughts, Bai Yunfei spoke in determination,

“Yes, master. Your student understands.”

“Good.” Zi Jin nodded. “Then let’s return to the main topic. Since your proficiency with the art of crafting has gotten to this point thus far, let’s have you craft another soul armament and see.”

But when Bai Yunfei didn’t move from his spot, Zi Jin grew curious, “Whats wrong?”

“Er...I....” Bai Yunfei was slightly embarrassed to respond. “Master, my crafting cauldron was destroyed that day....and I’ve no more ingredients left....”

Zi Jin was surprised, but laughed straight afterward, “How did I forget such a thing...”

He shook his hand to summon forth a crafting cauldron from his space ring. As soon as it appeared, Bai Yunfei could see that it was glowing a bright red and violet color.

“This cauldron is known as the ‘Lighting-fire Cauldron’. Your master used this a long time ago, and now, it shall be yours!”

Chapter 235: The Lightning-fire Cauldron and the Violet Soul Ring!!

The Lightning-fire Cauldron was about as tall as Bai Yunfei and reached nearly two meters in length. Its make was rather simple; perhaps even slightly old-fashioned. The cauldron was entirely crimson in color and exuded a red light with a slight trace of violet-colored lightning that crackled just almost out from sight in it.

“The cauldron was constructed with plenty of changeling stones, allowing the cauldron’s dimensions to be changed as you will. This way, spear-shaped soul armaments can be made with this cauldron without a problem.” Zi Jin said. Waving his hand again, a strand of elemental fire flowed from his body to the cauldron and lit it

And right in front of their very eyes, the bottom of the cauldron began to transform to take on the shape of a mold for a long spear.

Smiling when he saw the bright-eyed Bai Yunfei, Zi Jin said, “Transmit your soulforce into it and the cauldron will change its shape as you will it. Yunfei, give it a try.”

“Yes!”

Bai Yunfei replied at once. Striding forward to give it a try, he sucked in a deep breath and put his right hand onto the cauldron in an attempt to try and change the cauldron’s shape.

Unique Equipment
Equipment Grade: Low Heaven Elemental Affinity: Fire, Lightning Special Effect 1: Increase the chance of success when crafting by 200% Special Effect 2: Additional 5% chance of adding a lightning affinity to the crafted item. Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

Author Note: In order to avoid any confusion again, please allow me to explain this once more: An increase in percentage is merely that, an increase in percentage. For example, if the chance of success is 20%, then an increase of 200% makes this chance become 60%. A chance of success over 100% obviously means that each attempt will end in a success. I hope this clears things up for everyone.

Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up at the notification. He knew that this notification would pop up so he hadn't been too surprised when it did. He acknowledged the notification and then allowed for it to disappear before he started to change the shape of the cauldron as Zi Jin instructed him too.

There was a faint crackling sound as the cauldron started to revert back to its normal shape.

Zi Jin nodded his head in satisfaction at the sight. He seemed to have muttered something to himself under his breath as he said, "Since I'm giving you this cauldron, allow me to give you another gift for your apprenticeship! Yunfei, this space ring has accompanied your master for almost a hundred years. Take it, it's yours now!"

And with that, Zi Jin took out a space ring that was colored just slightly violet from his left hand. With a wave, the space ring was flown over to where Bai Yunfei before neatly falling on top of Bai Yunfei's palm.

"Master, this..."

Zi Jin smiled, "It's named a 'violet soul ring'. As a soul armament, it is an exceedingly rare item. Take it, you'll see that it'll be a great deal of help to you as you are."

"Eh?" Bai Yunfei said in confusion; his eyes hovered onto the space ring and watched as the notification popped up in his head.

Elemental Affinity: Space

Attribute: +660 Spirit

Item Effect: Volume of ring increases to the cumulative sum of all space-related items held within.

Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei wasn't prepared for this.

His eyes grew wide, and the look of shock on his face was impossible to mask.

“How is it, Yunfei, can you tell how special the ring is?” Zi Jin misunderstood the reason why Bai Yunfei was shocked and said, “This violet soul ring is something I crafted by accident in the past. Even as one of the accessory related soul armaments, this one is unique as it can store space affinity soul armaments in it.”

Snapping back to awareness, Bai Yunfei forced the shock in his chest back down and asked, “Master, this....this accessory type soul armament, would I be able to craft such a thing?”

After searching for so long, Bai Yunfei had finally found an accessory that could grant him an attribute before being upgraded!! His conjectures in the past were correct then, soul armaments like this really existed....

Zi Jin nodded his head to respond to Bai Yunfei, “You can, but that requires a completely different set of methods. But those type of things can only be made into soul armaments in very rare occurrences. A good majority of the accessories made remain as normal item ware despite the materials that are wasted in making them....You’ve not a chance to craft them yet. In time, I will teach you the art.”

Zi Jin waved his right hand again, allowing for all sorts of ingredients to pile up from the side. “Well then. Yunfei, use the cauldron and craft a soul armament for me to see.”

“Yes!”

Without hesitation, Bai Yunfei placed the ring away in his robes and sucked in a deep breath of air. Solemnly, he looked at the pile of ingredients and stuck his right hand out. Bending all five fingers, he had several ingredients come flying to his hand.

The ability in making things fly was something he learned how to do now, but it wasn't at a level where it could be used for battle.

Inserting the fire attribute vermiculite into the cauldron, Bai Yunfei pushed his soulforce into the cauldron, causing it to light up with a bang.

.....

Two hours later.

“Bang!”

There was a muffled explosion from within the cauldron, causing Bai Yunfei's face to pale drastically. The ingredients was being burnt away right in front of his very eyes; he had been doing well just a moment ago, but then this failure had happened straight away!

“Haha, Yunfei, don't feel discouraged. This happens normally when crafting. Try again.” Zi Jin laughed as if not blaming Bai Yunfei for his mistakes.

“Yes, master.” Bai Yunfei spoke. Wiping away his inner thoughts, Bai Yunfei calmed down and tried again to craft a soul armament.

.....

Roughly half a day later, a bright-red sword came flying out from the cauldron and into Bai Yunfei's hand.

Equipment Grade: High Human

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Attack: 483

Soul Compatibility: 5%

It was still a high-human tier soul armament, but the attack was just a little bit away from making the soul armament an earth tier soul armament....

Looking at the soul armament in his hand, Bai Yunfei looked slightly disappointed.

But there was a look of satisfaction in Zi Jin's eyes when he nodded his head. "Very good. This is much closer to being an earth tier soul armament. Yunfei, your talent in crafting is truly rare beyond rare. Even your senior Jiang Fan wasn't as talented as you were at your age...."

Bai Yunfei sighed nonetheless, "But, I wasn't able to craft an earth tier soul armament...."

Starting just a bit, Zi Jin laughed, "So you're not happy with your results?"

"Now that your student is a Soul Ancestor, should an earth tier soul armament not be expected?"

"Do you think that being able to craft an earth tier soul armament is as easy as crafting a human tier soul armament?" Zi Jin shook his head lightly. "Soul Ancestors being able to craft an earth tier soul armament is true alright, but it isn't iron-clad. You only just became one, there's plenty of techniques you've yet to learn, and the ingredients for making one could use some changes."

"You've condensed the ingredients roughly eight hundred times, though your application of the 'three revolutions per rotation' technique wasn't all that bad, but it isn't the most optimal one for these ingredients. Instead, you should...."

Carefully, Zi Jin explained to Bai Yunfei step by step several

techniques for what to do with the ingredients while Bai Yunfei paid close attention to each and every word said to him.

“.....”

I’ll give you a demonstration. Pay close attention to when I change the intensity of the flames....”

.....

For the entire day, Bai Yunfei learned in earnest under Zi Jin’s practiced hand. Zi Jin’s explanations were exceedingly detailed and helped Bai Yunfei step into a whole new world about the applications for the craft and answering any other questions he had. In a single day, he felt as if he learned much more than he’d regularly learn than if he practiced by himself for tens of days.

In that day, he made four more soul armaments and succeeded in making two. Both of which were exceedingly close on being earth tier armaments, but he wasn’t able to make it over that one small line in between the two tiers.

That night after Bai Yunfei returned to his room...

After learning for the entire day, Bai Yunfei wasn’t in a hurry to craft any more. So instead, he sat down on his bed and began to think about several things.

The violet soul ring fell onto his hand.

“Upgrade.” Bai Yunfei thought.

.....

Chapter 236: A Stabilized Rate of Training and Changes to the Upgrade Technique

Equipment Grade: High Earth

Elemental Affinity: Space

Upgrade Level: +10

Attribute: +660 Spirit

Additional Attribute: +320 Spirit

Soul Compatibility: 10%

Item Effect: Volume of ring increases to the cumulative sum of all space-related items held within.

+10 Additional Effect: Up to 2000 soulpoints can be stockpiled for later use.

Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

Looking at the +10 Violet Soul Ring, Bai Yunfei had a happy look on his face, “Some soulpoints and a space element, that’s double the success! Plus, being able to store 2000 soulpoints is already a third of what I can store in my body at once. With the ring fully charged, even someone of the same level of strength as me won’t be a match for me....”

Thanks to the space rings that were used to store soulbeast puppets and several normal space rings, the amount of storage of the Violet Soul Ring was at about a hundred cubic meters. He took off the space ring he wore on his right hand and replaced it with the Violet Soul Ring.

As of right now, Bai Yunfei wore two rings. The left hand had the

soulforce recovering space ring, and the right had the Violet Soul Ring.

Now that he had everything worked out, Bai Yunfei took out the lightning fire cauldron.

Gently putting his hand on top of it, he thought, “Upgrade!”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: Fire, Lightning

Upgrade Level: +1

Special Effect 1: Increase chance of success when crafting by 210%

Special Effect 2: Additional 6% chance of adding a lightning affinity to the crafted item.

Soul Compatibility: 1%

Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

Surprised, Bai Yunfei upgraded the cauldron one more time.

The first special effect went to 220%, the second special effect became 7%, and the soul compatibility grew to 2%.

Rather than continuing to upgrade, Bai Yunfei stopped here to think.

“One of the more particular points to the Upgrade Technique was that you couldn’t tell what aspect of the equipment would be upgraded prior to the upgrade. Is this what you’d call a ‘flaw’? Will I come across a problem like this in the future?”

Bai Yunfei stared at his cauldron with a contemplative look, “The

lightning fire cauldron is quite different when its upgraded than when a weapon type soul armament is upgraded....The probabilities of its effects went up, I wonder what happens if I upgrade it to +10? It doesn't look out of the ordinary right now, but I wonder if master will be able to tell the difference if I upgraded it?"

After putting much thought into this, Bai Yunfei shook his head, "As long as I don't show the Violet Soul Ring's effects, the master won't notice the changes. But the lightning fire cauldron will be seen by the master since I'll be using it daily. To avoid trouble, I'll hold off on upgrading it. Right now, the most important thing is to learn the art of crafting. Relying on the cauldron wouldn't be a good thing...."

Although Bai Yunfei was already Zi Jin's disciple, the Upgrade Technique was his biggest secret. Never did the thought of telling Zi Jin about it ever cross his mind.

.....

On the second day, Bai Yunfei was practically stuck in the Northern Point. Under the guidance of Zi Jin, Bai Yunfei was further entranced by the art that was crafting.

Crafting a human tier soul armament was only just the most rudimentary of achievements; so said Zi Jin. Bai Yunfei was stuck on this phase for more than half a month before he was able to create his first low earth tier soul armament. Although it was just barely above what could be considered an earth tier soul armament, it was still an improvement from before.

After that, his training in the art of crafting reached a lull. There hadn't been any unexpected spikes in circumstances since earth tier soul armaments were even harder to craft than human tier ones. Right now, his odds for making one was one successful soul armament for every five attempts; and even that one was a low earth tier.

But an achievement like that had still been enough for Zi Jin to be satisfied. Bai Yunfei was getting more and more familiar with the craft, but he wasn't spending the entire day seeking out the master's instructions, he was at the caves crafting a soul armament for training. If he had a question, Bai Yunfei would go to Zi Jin for guidance.

The cliffs had been 'repaired' as if nothing had happened to it in the first place. The upper half looked completely new in comparison to down below, but other than that, it was back to normal!

Bai Yunfei had asked Song Lin in passing, only to hear that it was elder Xiao Binzi that had repaired the cliffs. The elder was in possession of an extremely strong soul armament that could control the earth; but other than that, Song Lin didn't know what else happened.

And so, two months passed as Bai Yunfei continued to train and craft....

Early one day when the sun was just starting to sprinkle down its bright rays onto the earth, Bai Yunfei was just slowly opening his eyes. Sitting upright on his bed, Bai Yunfei stretched his arms and then the rest of his body, eliciting a series of crackling sounds from the bones in his body.

Grabbing a pair of nunchucks, Bai Yunfei looked at them briefly before storing it back into his space ring. "6350 Soulpoints...." He muttered under his breath to himself.

Yesternight, he spent the most of the night time seeing how much soulforce he had. In the end, he came to a total of 6350.

Ever since he became a Soul Ancestor, Bai Yunfei realized that using up his soulforce over and over again to increase the total amount was no longer the same as it once was. As a Soul Sprite, he could increase the capacity by at least twenty, but now, he could barely get half of that....

“I’m getting stronger slower and slower now....” Bai Yunfei stroked at his chin with his right hand. “It’s possible I won’t be able to increase my soulforce with this ‘cheat’ in the future then, so I should try to avoid depending on it any more. It’s a good thing my training is still going at a decent pace though.”

He had also discovered during one of his crafting attempts that his strength was slowly increasing in accordance to his crafting. As the quality of his work got higher, the stronger he became.

This was where students of the Crafting School differed from others (or perhaps it’d be better to say the art of crafting). They didn’t have to rely on training their souls to get stronger. They could achieve the same results by crafting.

Otherwise, most of the students would be capable of only crafting soul armaments without being able to get stronger.

As for the Upgrade Technique, Bai Yunfei discovered a huge change after it was ‘upgraded’.

The chances of upgrading a low quality successfully had been changed.

And not for the better.

When he was upgrading several incomplete soul armaments, Bai Yunfei realized that out of 30 of them, not a single one had been able to reach +10!

This realization left Bai Yunfei thunderstruck. He thought that it was due to his bad luck that day, but upon further reflection, that line of thought didn’t quite seem right. After spending several days making even more incomplete soul armaments, Bai Yunfei tried his hand at upgrading again. So curious was he that Bai Yunfei had several students go down to buy him some regular weapons to test his theories.

At last, did Bai Yunfei come to a conclusion. The Upgrade Technique had an extremely low rate of success for any item in the

human tier and below! Upgrading any armament in that range was practically impossible to get to +10!

There had been several other discoveries as well. When looking at one of the 'Superior' equipment he got to +10 way before his time at the Crafting School, Bai Yunfei realized that it had somehow gained an affinity for 'fire' despite not having it before!

It puzzled Bai Yunfei. He didn't understand what was going on, but he was left with one single guess: As the Upgrade Technique improved, ordinary equipment would no longer be able to withstand the amount of 'energy' being used to upgrade it.

Even now, he could feel that each time he used Upgrade Technique, the soulforce being consumed was mutating the worldly elementals around him. In other words, the Upgrade Technique was borrowing Bai Yunfei's soulforce to pull and manipulate the elements to improve the equipment.

Thus when the Upgrade Technique grew stronger, so did the 'energy' being used. Regular weapons would no longer be able to handle such a powerful energy, so their success rates dropped drastically.

With this guess in mind, Bai Yunfei tried his best to 'delve' into the 'change' that was happening when he used the Upgrade Technique. But it was to no avail. Perhaps the change was far too mysterious for him to decipher, or his power wasn't strong enough to understand it....

.....

Looking down at his Violet Soul Ring, Bai Yunfei pressed his soulforce into it and watched as several notifications popped up into his mind.

"30 low-earth tier soul armaments and 17 human tier soul armaments...."

This was the bounty Bai Yunfei earned after these past two

months. It wasn't as if he spent all of his time crafting soul armament after soul armament. There came days where Bai Yunfei would only make a few and try to adjust several techniques for improvement. Sometimes, it'd take multiple days to make even one soul armament, but the amount he made was already subject to the admiration of a good deal of students in the school.

After joining the Crafting School and learning the art of crafting, Bai Yunfei realized that soul armaments—low tier ones in particular—had very little value within the school....

Of course, this perspective was held by all the other disciples who were as strong as he was in the inner school.

After much thought, Bai Yunfei thought, "I'll store a few so I can upgrade them all later. There's plenty of time to craft; I refuse to believe I won't be able to upgrade a single item out of the bunch here...."

Bai Yunfei's thoughts were equating well over a hundred soul armaments to being as numerous as the stalks of bok choy. After these several months of being in the Crafting School, Bai Yunfei was already starting to adopt the mindset of that of a 'wastrel'. If anyone else were to realize this, their reactions would surely be an interesting one.

Standing up from the bed, Bai Yunfei finished up the rest of his daily morning rituals.

As soon as he finished, the sound of a young girl could be heard from the outside.

"Brother strawhat, come on out, we're about to go!!"

Chapter 237: Redfire City

By the time Bai Yunfei walked out of his room, a large group of people was already gathered there in wait for him.

Tang Xinyun, Huangfu Rui, Ye Zhiqiu, Mo Xiaoxuan, Xi Yan, Zhong Xuhao, Liu Mang, Zhang Shanxian, Si Kongxian, and even Fei Nian was there to make a total of ten. As soon as Bai Yunfei came out from his room, the group greeted him with a smile and friendly greeting. Even the sparrow-sized quickshade bird could be seen perched on top of Tang Xinyun's shoulder as it combed its own feathers while the red magiboar was currently being hugged in between Huangfu Rui's arms. Every so often, the red magiboar would let loose a snort from its maw.

"Haha, my apologies for making everyone wait." Bai Yunfei spoke up apologetically as he approached them.

"Not at all, you're just on time, Yunfei." Tang Xinyun smiled. "We only just got here when Huangfu Rui called you out."

Sticking her nose up coyishly, Huangfu Rui spoke, "Everyone else but brother strawhat was here, so I called him out. Hmph! We should've gone down first and let him panic when he can't find us!"

Taken aback at first, Bai Yunfei then grinned in response. "You know, Doraemon. If you don't take me with you, I won't be able to buy you toys when we get to the city!"

The nickname of Doraemon was given to Huangfu Rui thanks to her tendency to pull out practically anything she wanted from her pouch. But only Bai Yunfei knew the meaning behind the nickname of course.

"Aah!" At first, Huangfu Rui panicked at the thought. But then when another idea struck her mind, she stuck her tongue out at Bai Yunfei, "Hmph! Sis Yun will buy me something, who needs you!"

“Haha....okay, okay. Junior Rui, we’ll have to get to Redfire City first before we can buy anything!” Mo Xiaoxuan laughed. “Let’s get going then!”

But before they could move, Bai Yunfei asked, “Hey, where’s junior Tian? Isn’t he going with us?”

“Yuhang is at a very important stage in his training, so he couldn’t come with us this time.”

“Oh, that’s unfortunate. Let’s get going then; walking there’ll take some time.”

“Yea, let’s go!!”

.....

Plans were made for everyone to go to Redfire City before, but because of how ‘addicted’ Bai Yunfei was to crafting soul armaments, those plans were pushed back to today.

Since Si Kongxian was familiar with the road, they led the group down Mt. Crimson. As they traveled towards the city, the group laughed and chatted with one another merrily.

It was early morning when they left the Crafting School but two in the afternoon when they arrived at Redfire City—a feat that left Bai Yunfei wiping at his sweat in embarrassment. How could he possibly tell everyone that when he tried to get to the base of Mt. Crimson from Redfire City, it took him two entire days!

Just how big of a detour did he take!!

Redfire City was located at the very center of the Great Plains Province. As the geographical center, the city was prosperous in many ways. Not only were they the capital city of the province, they were also the closest city to the Crafting School.

There were almost ten thousand students to the Crafting School. And in their daily expenditures, the biggest factor was their need for materials for crafting. It was a terrifying sum when totaled, but

with the amount of low tier soul armament they crafted, the exchange was profitable for both sides.

Though low tier soul armaments were a very common sight in the Crafting School, they may as well be priceless treasures to outsiders. There were countless of schools in the world, and the amount of soul armaments the Crafting School made was nowhere enough to supply them all.

Furthermore, it was strictly forbidden for regular students to negotiate trades of any soul armaments of the earth tier or above. Human tier soul armaments may be traded as each individual student desired, and sometimes several materials wouldn't be provided to them by the Crafting School so several students would sometimes trade soul armaments for materials.

There were also plenty of traveling soul cultivators or other school members that'd come to the Crafting School to plead for a trade of some sort.

In short, Redfire City became a central hub for plenty of major figures and strong soul cultivators. As such it could be said that the city was where the strong hid amongst the weak and where the evil mixed with the good.

Keeping watch over this city was one of the 56 warlords of the Tianhun Continent and administrator of the Great Plains Province; Sima Wenxu. A mid-stage Soul King

Bai Yunfei and the group of friend's arrival into the city had been the center of attention of plenty of people; but when they started to blend in with the other traveler on the streets, not much interest was paid to mind. The streets were vast, and even the group of eleven wouldn't be able to hold up the streets even if they tried.

The group was clearly holed up in the Crafting School for far too long; as they all started to grow visibly excited from all the sights. Even from the moment they stepped into the city, many of them

pointed at a nearby store or stopping in one of them to purchase something. For every hundred meters they progressed into the city, ten minutes would pass at the very least.

“Wow! There’s so many people here! Sis Yun, look! That guy over there is balancing so many bowls on his head!!” Huangfu Rui shrieked with excitement as she ran off. When everyone else looked up to see where she was going, they all saw a crowd of people gathered around what appeared to be a sideshow performance.

Though the group were all powerful soul cultivators and could perform the acts that the commoners were doing, the fact that the commoners were able to do it so smoothly was enjoyable to see. The younger ones of the group, namely Zhong Xuhao and Liu Mang were the next to follow Huangfu Rui off to look at the excitement with craned necks.

A faint smile graced Tang Xinyun’s lips, “If Xiao Rui is so interested, we should take a look as well.”

Having no objections, the rest of the group moved to follow after Huangfu Rui when all of a sudden, the person in question cried out again, “Wow! There’s tanghulu over there! I want some, I want some!”

Turning her head to look at Bai Yunfei, Huangfu Rui smiled wildly with glee, “Brother strawhat, I want to eat some tanghulu, can you buy me some?”

When he turned his head to look, a vendor could be seen selling tanghulu over a hundred meters to the left of where they were.

Curiously, a faint memory popped back up in Bai Yunfei’s head, causing his heart to jerk slightly as if a wound of some sort had been poked. A deep mental wound that was still raw to the touch.

“Yunfei, are you alright?” Tang Xinyun spoke out in concern when she saw the strange look overcome Bai Yunfei’s face.

“I’m fine....” Bai Yunfei shook his head before smiling back towards Huangfu Rui. “Okay then. I’ll buy you some. Let’s go on over and I’ll have some bought for you.”

He then turned his head to look at Zhong Xuhao and Liu Mang, “Do you two want to eat some?”

“Tsk!” Zhong Xuhao frowned, “Only girls and little kids would want to eat that. I’m far too old to be eating stuff like that....”

“I walk the road of serious business, I don’t eat stuff like that....” Liu Mang spoke coolly as his eyes glossed over at several pretty looking girls on the street....

“.....”

Completely disregarding the two self-delusional kids, Bai Yunfei asked the others for their thoughts before going off to buy some.

.....

After walking the three hundred meters necessary, Bai Yunfei was just about to buy some tanghulu when a small voice called out to him from the right side of the street.

“O’ heroic one, I’ve a reading of your trigram today....”

Pausing mid-stride, Bai Yunfei turned his head to look. A single 24-25 year old young man was currently seated on top of the corner wall of a building as he smiled down on Bai Yunfei.

This young man was a handsome one, but his dressing was of an extremely strange taste. He wore an extremely wrinkled monk’s robe, but the look in his eyes made him seem more like a young heir with naught a care in the world. Right besides him was a pole about as tall as he was with a white-clothed banner that had the words ‘fortune diviner’ written on it.

“Uhm....Are you talking to me?” Bai Yunfei asked after looking around himself.

Nodding, the young man hung his banner onto his shoulders and

walked up to Bai Yunfei. Giving him a looking over, the man slowly said, “O’ heroic one, the dark lines on your glabellum indicate that disaster approaches.....”

Staring quizzically at him, Bai Yunfei asked with narrowed eyes, “Are you....”

Chapter 238: Na Lanyin

Staring quizzically at him, Bai Yunfei asked with narrowed eyes, “Are you...”

“Haha, this old ma—ah—my name is Na Lanyin.” The man’s hand had run halfway down an imaginary beard when he suddenly gave up and turned forty-five degrees, looking at a well-rounded young wife standing on the second floor of a nearby restaurant. “I am from a wealthy family, but my fortune-telling has always been accurate. People have called me the ‘Right Hand of the God of Fate,’ hehe, or perhaps, the ‘miser’ would be a better nickname... shit, judging from your reaction, you’ve never seen or heard of me before? How inexperienced you are...”

“.....”

Frowning, Bai Yunfei turned to walk away from the person.

“Hey, don’t go yet! Hero, what I’m saying is true!” Na Lanyin flew off like an arrow when he saw Bai Yunfei leaving him. “I’m only just warning you. If you don’t believe me, let me divine it again. I guarantee that you’ll embrace what I’m saying as true!”

As he spoke, he lifted his right hand up for Bai Yunfei to see. On his wrist was a palm-sized tortoiseshell. From the looks of how dirty and smeared it was, the tortoiseshell looked as if it had just been recently excavated from the earth.

“Put your hand on this. I’m feeling generous today, so I’ll divine your trigram and show you how to avoid disaster...” Na Lanyin moved the tortoiseshell over to Bai Yunfei’s face so that it was touching his nose.

Unsure whether he should laugh or cry, Bai Yunfei took two steps back and pushed the man’s hand away. “My apologies, but I’ve no interest in what divination you plan on doing. Take your business somewhere else...”

However, it felt as if Na Lanyin was determined to ‘help’ him. Pushing his tortoiseshell forward, the male said, “We can talk about money later, if my divination isn’t accurate, then it’ll be free of charge....”

“I said there’s no need, you can go awa—”

In the middle of his speech, Bai Yunfei’s hand pressed against the tortoiseshell to push it away when, all of a sudden, his words died in his mouth. Shock registered his face as Bai Yunfei stared at the tortoiseshell right in front of him.

Equipment Grade: Middle Heaven

Elemental Affinity: Earth

Defense: 4690

Equipment Effect: When paired with a special technique, there is a 5% chance of predicting the future. The level of detail may vary.

Upgrade Requirement: 260 Soulpoints

Completely by accident, the notification for the tortoiseshell appeared in Bai Yunfei’s head.

“.....”

“.....”

The two stood in silence against one another. Bai Yunfei was still because of his shock, but Na Lanyin was still because he was confused why Bai Yunfei was shocked.

When Na Lanyin noticed that Bai Yunfei was looking at the tortoiseshell in shock, the look on his face tightened.

Quickly drawing back his hand, the male harrumphed, “A no is a no I suppose! I have changed my mind. I’ll be taking my leave

elsewhere. Goodbye now!”

And with that, the male turned face and walked away.

“Hey!”

By the time Bai Yunfei thought about grabbing him, the male was already a dozen meters away and close to blending in with the crowd.

Just faintly, a voice tickled Bai Yunfei’s ear.

“Hero, this is my last warning to you. Be sure to avoid trouble and keep those you care about close, else you will find regret to be the only thing left in your embrace!!”

“.....”

After thinking about what had been said, Bai Yunfei gave up the idea of chasing after the person with a confused shake of his head.

“Who in the world was that person? I thought he was a swindler at first, but... that mid-heaven tier item... that tortoiseshell was mid-heaven-tiered!! Who would’ve thought that the very first item I have seen like that would be found in a situation like this?

“And... that equipment effect...” Bai Yunfei took an unconscious step back, “Predicting? Was there an effect like that in this world? It wasn’t even an effect from being upgraded... how could that be real? Predicting the future?”

Then another thought struck him, “Ah! Could he be someone from the Fate School!?”

Looking off in the direction Na Lanyin had disappeared, Bai Yunfei sighed before turning to go buy the tanghulu from the vendor.

“Who would’ve thought that the very first person I’d meet after stepping down the mountain would be such a mysterious person? I wonder what his goal was... he was clearly a strong soul cultivator if I couldn’t sense him before... but still, I shouldn’t meet with a

suspicious people like him. I came here to play, not to find trouble...”

.....

On the other side of the road, Na Lanyin had already walked a few thousand meters away from Bai Yunfei. Turning back to look at Bai Yunfei, the carefree look in his eyes was replaced by a look of solemn dignity.

“That youngster is a strange one! How dangerous! He could tell how special the Absolute Earth Trigram Shell!” Na Lanyin raised the tortoiseshell up to his eye and looked it over. “There’s no problems with the shell, and the tortoiseshell is practically indistinguishable to any other tortoiseshell when not being used. Did he really realize what was going on?”

“This is the first time I’ve ever seen a person with such clear omens of ‘divided luck’... I was only curious to see what he was like, never did I think that his ‘knowledge’ would be that strong. It’s fortunate I got out quick. If trouble were to befall me for a small moment’s curiosity, I’d be getting the short end of the stick...”

Na Lanyin shook his head and turned away. With his banner fluttering slightly in the wind, the man walked back into the ocean of people and disappeared.

.....

After buying the tanghulu, Bai Yunfei walked back down the road to where his friends were, but when he saw them, Bai Yunfei paused briefly where he stood.

There was a crowd of people where his friends were, but everyone was moving about in a rather chaotic manner. Several people were even whispering to one another as they inched away from the spot.

At the center, two parties of people were facing one another.

One of the two parties was Tang Xinyun and the others. On the other side was a group of strong-looking attendants with a rather importantly-dressed youth leading the front.

It seemed as if the two parties were talking with one another.

Narrowing his eyes, Bai Yunfei quickened his pace.

“Xinyun, what’s going on?” Bai Yunfei asked Tang Xinyun as soon as he got there while casting an eye at the people in front of them.

“Brother strawhat, you’re finally back! That took way too long!” Tang Xinyun hadn’t even opened her mouth to say something when Huangfu Rui voiced her annoyance, but when she saw the tanghulu Bai Yunfei had, her annoyed face gave way to joy as she took one.

From the side, Mo Xiaoxuan explained, “Brother Bai, what happened was that just a second ago, there were a few bullies who thought they’d be able to pick up senior Tang. By the time we realized she was in trouble, lord Sima was already in the middle of stopping them... he and senior Fei Nian look like they’re friends.”

“Oh?” Bai Yunfei asked. Turning around to look at the people next to the two parties, Bai Yunfei noticed five dirtily-dressed men pressed against the ground with pale faces. Their left hands clutched tightly at their strangely-bent right hands and their faces were heavily sweating.

Clearly, their right hands were broken, but they were afraid to voice their pain.

Looking up, Bai Yunfei could see a young youth in his twenties looking suspiciously at him. By his side was a delicate-looking young woman who was also staring curiously.

“Yunfei, let me introduce you.” It was right at that time Fei Nian spoke to Bai Yunfei rather than to his companion. “This is the third heir to the house of Sima, Sima Dong. He’s a friend of mine,

and this is his younger sister, Sima Yue.”

“The house of Sima?” Bai Yunfei asked, “isn’t that...”

Fei Nian nodded. “Yes. The very same house of Sima as Marquis Sima Wenxu, the administrator of Redfire City.”

Turning back to Sima Dong, Fei Nian said, “Elder brother Sima, this is Bai Yunfei. He just joined the Crafting School, but he is my... martial uncle.”

A smile graced Sima Dong’s face when he listened to Fei Nian’s introduction. “Ah, so you are lord Bai, it’s a pleasure to mee—”

Then the weight of what Fei Nian said sank in.

Whipping his head back to look at Fei Nian, Sima Dong asked, “What did you just say? He’s... your martial uncle!?”

Chapter 239: A Stroll

“Yeah, you didn’t hear wrong. He became a disciple of the previous headmaster Zi Jin just recently, making him the fourth martial uncle.” Fei Nian shook his head. It seemed like he still hadn’t quite wrapped his head around the fact that Bai Yunfei’s spot in the hierarchy was now higher than his.

Bai Yunfei nodded his head to Sima Dong. “It’s only just a position. In private, I am still just someone of the same generation as you, brother Sima. I thank you for your assistance earlier.”

Paired with how modest Bai Yunfei looked, Sima Dong was still not quite fully back to awareness yet.

A new disciple of the previous headmaster of the Crafting School! There had been no warnings about this; rather, an abrupt statement straight from the source!

If it were one of the five elemental schools or the Wind Lightning School, the fact that the previous headmaster had taken in a disciple would have spread like wildfire throughout the continent. There would be a massive ceremony for the sake of announcing it to the world, but the Crafting School hadn’t. Aside from a single assembly of the student body, there had been no other announcements from the school. How casual was the school?

Sima Dong was probably the first ‘outsider’ to know of the fact, so it was no wonder why he was surprised.

He knew that Fei Nian wasn’t the type to joke around about stuff like this, so this meant that the previous headmaster, Zi Jin, had really taken in a new disciple!

Realizing that he had lost his composure, Sima Dong quickly tried to calm the emotions on his face. Waving his hand, he said, “There’s no need for thanks. I was only passing by, lord B—ah... er...”

He had no idea what he should be calling Bai Yunfei by. Thus, he was completely mortified at the moment.

When Bai Yunfei saw this, he smiled, “Brother Sima, there’s no need for such politeness. I’ve said it before, we’re both from the same generation. Calling me any other way would only be awkward.”

“Haha, alright then! Then, don’t mind me if I call you brother Bai.” Sima Dong bounced back with a happy laugh. “Are your friends here all new members of the Crafting School? If you’re here to sightsee, then please allow me to play the part of host and take you on a tour around the city. I guarantee that you’ll be fully satisfied!”

He could see the hesitation in everyone’s eyes even as he finished speaking. It occurred to him that these people would naturally be skeptical about having someone plan their entire trip for them out of the blue.

Hastily, he said, “My sister and I were on our way to the western part of the city for one of their theaters. Recently, the people have been talking about an extraordinarily good show being shown there... haha, I am in truth quite an enthusiast for shows. Would you all be interested in going together?”

“Oh? Is there? In that case, we can’t miss an opportunity like that, let’s go!” Fei Nian was the first to respond without any hesitation.

Surprised, Bai Yunfei cast a glance over to Fei Nian only to see that Fei Nian was currently looking at the young woman next to Sima Dong. From there, Bai Yunfei could guess the reason why Fei Nian came with them to Redfire City since he was usually so hard to ‘cooperate’ with. And what a reason it was...

Ye Zhiqiu and the others came to the same conclusion as well and gave Fei Nian a knowing look. Apologetically, Fei Nian said, “Well that is... I actually like this stuff too...”

Bai Yunfei nodded, “Sure, I believe you.”

Mo Xiaoxuan nodded as well, “I do too.”

“Same here.” Zhong Xuhao interjected.

“I believe!” Huangfu Rui’s hand shot into the air.

“.....”

There was a final conclusion from everyone. Fei Nian, Mo Xiaoxuan, and Xi Yan would go with the two Sima siblings to the show, Si Kongxian and Zhang Sanxian had some sort of ‘agreement’ with Zhong Xuhao and Liu Mang to go somewhere else to play, Ye Zhiqiu wanted to see the city for himself, Tang Xinyun would take Huangfu Rui to go buy several things, and Bai Yunfei would go see the city himself since he had no interest in the show.

“Young master... what should we do with these people?”

Just as everyone was preparing to leave, the attendants behind Sima Dong called out to him for instructions.

Sima Dong cast a glance at the groveling bullies in front of him, “Escort them to the authorities and have them deal with them!”

“Yes!!” The guard spoke before turning to lead the others away.

Hearing that Sima Dong planned for them to be sent to the authorities, the bullies immediately knew that their future would definitely be bleak and tragic. As soon as they heard what he said, the blood in their faces drained away. They didn’t even have time to beg for their lives as despair flooded their eyes.

Noticing their expression, Bai Yunfei had a small frown on his face, “Brother Sima, since they’ve already been punished, why not let them go? There’s no need to have the authorities deal with them.”

“Oh?” Sima Dong uttered in surprise. He looked to Bai Yunfei for a second before smiling, “How generous brother Bai is! Very well then. You lot, hurry up and scram!”

Grateful, the bullies all gave Bai Yunfei a look before scrambling away from this place.

Now that the problem with the bullies had been dealt with, the group decided to meet back up with each other by supper time at the most prominent restaurant in the city, the Red Aroma. Their supper and lodgings for the night would be prepared by Sima Dong's men, leaving Bai Yunfei and the group worry-free for their plans for the night.

.....

Wandering around the busy streets with no concise aims, Bai Yunfei looked around with an increasingly comfortable expression.

He first visited several accessory stores and bought their wares to upgrade later, but not once did he visit a weapon store. After joining the Crafting School, what use was there to buy weapons?

Bai Yunfei strolled around the city without anything out of the ordinary happening, and somehow, time managed to go on by just as quickly.

That night outside the Red Aroma, Tang Xinyun, Ye Zhiqiu, Si Kongxian and several others walked on over to the restaurant. They had met one another on the way, so they decided to make their way to the restaurant together.

Right beside Tang Xinyun was a tall young woman in a red robe. The two of them were talking to one another while sometimes one of the two would say something to Ye Zhiqiu.

This woman was Tang Xinyun's senior, Ling Yiyi, the fourth senior of the Northern Point.

By the time they made it to the restaurant, Sima Dong, Fei Nian, and their group could be seen inside; they had been the first to make it in.

Smiling, Sima Dong welcomed the second group, "Brother Ye, miss Tang, you're right on time. I've just paid the Red Aroma and

had them start cooking. After walking for so long, I'm sure you're all tired by now? Come in and have a drink!"

Tang Xinyun nodded her head, "Yes, thank you for your troubles, lord Sima."

"Haha, it was nothing! Nothing at all! Ah? This young miss is...?"

"This is my senior, Ling Yiyi. We met while walking around the city. I hope lord Sima doesn't mind if she comes with us?"

"Of course not! I can't welcome her fast enough, even!" Sima Dong warmly laughed as he welcomed Ling Yiyi, but then he realized something, "Where's brother Bai? Wasn't he with you?"

Mo Xiaoxuan shook his head, "No idea. We didn't meet brother Bai once."

The entire group was here already barring Bai Yunfei.

"I'm here!"

Suddenly, a voice called out from above before a single figure came leaping down from the roofs. As the figure landed on the ground, everyone saw that it was Bai Yunfei.

His sudden drop from the sky had startled countless commoners, causing them to start or cry out in shock. Even Ye Zhiqiu and the others were startled. Confused, Sima Dong asked, "Brother Bai, what were you..."

Bai Yunfei gave two embarrassed coughs, "I was a little farther away. I was afraid I'd be late, so I took a shortcut..."

"Oh..." Though still mystified, Sima Dong didn't press the question. "Well since brother Bai is here, let's all go in."

"Yes, let's. My stomach has been hungry for some time." Bai Yunfei nodded his head as he turned to look to everyone else.

When he saw Ling Yiyi, his eyes widened a bit, "Sister Ling, what brings you here?"

Bai Yunfei was rather familiar with plenty of students in the Crafting School by now, especially the disciples since they had met with one another multiple times. Bai Yunfei was also pretty easy to talk to and didn't have the 'aura' of a martial uncle, so many disciples got along with him.

Smiling, Ling Yiyi greeted Bai Yunfei, "I was buying a few things when I met sister Tang. When I heard everyone else was here, I decided to come with."

"Ah, so I see..." Bai Yunfei glanced at Ye Zhiqiu. It had been in passing, but Bai Yunfei had heard that Ye Zhiqiu and Ling Yiyi got along quite well....

Stepping into the interior of the restaurant, everyone was led to the most luxurious and largest room. When Bai Yunfei and his group entered the city, they had numbered eleven people, but with the inclusion of Ling Yiyi, Sima Dong, and his sister Sima Yue, there were now fourteen people gathered around the table.

No sooner did they sit down than platters of exotic delicacies came streaming to the table. The meals at the Crafting School were by no means poor fare, but they would never be able to compare to the food here. Combined with their walk this morning and then the strolling they did in the afternoon, they were all starving. With much gusto, everyone began to talk with one another while helping themselves to the food.

"Ah, I remembered tonight there will be a very interesting carnival for the Lantern Festival. Would you all be interested in seeing it?" Sima Dong proposed.

"The lantern carnival? I've heard of that before." Zhang Sanxian replied. "I saw plenty of people setting things up on my way back; it looked pretty fun, shall we go?"

"We may as well go! It'll be plenty of fun with everyone there!" Fei Nian nodded, but his eyes continued to look at Sima Yue. What he was trying to get at was clear to see for everyone else.

Huangfu Rui was excited as well, “I want to go! I want to go! I want to see the lanterns!”

There wasn’t anyone that objected to this proposal, but they all looked to Bai Yunfei for confirmation.

He was surprised to see that everyone would look to him for confirmation, but Bai Yunfei smiled. “I don’t have any complaints. Why don’t we go when it’s dark out?”

Chapter 240: Lantern Festival (Second)

There was a river in Redfire City known as the Clearjade River that spanned about fifty meters. The water flowed slowly and was so clear that the bottom of the river could be seen. Willows were strewn across the shores, and with the greenish-blue hue that surrounded the area, the place was extremely serene. This was one of the more frequent haunts for the people of the city to clear their minds and have fun.

Tonight, the river was far more popular than it would normally be during the daytime. The moon was shining brightly above the middle of the river, and lanterns had been hung up in numerous amounts within the surrounding five kilometers. There was so much light it was even brighter at night than during daytime. If one were to look from afar, all they would see was a sea of lanterns.

By the side of the river, several lanterns hung from the willow tree's branches. Vendor booths had been set up on both sides of the roads, and lanterns had been hung on the booths as well. The vendors sold plenty of delicious foods to the customers.

After Bai Yunfei and the group finished their meal, they all decided to head to the carnival. Splitting up, each person began to go to wherever they pleased. Whether by accident or by fortune, Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun were grouped together—with Huangfu Rui of course.

With Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun walking side by side, they slowly progressed down the busy streets. Huangfu Rui held a small fish-shaped lantern in one hand and a tanghulu in the other. She hummed a folk song as she skipped along and peered all over the place. She was followed by Xiao Rourou who pranced right beside her. The quickshade bird flew several inches above their heads and would occasionally flap its wings.

The three of them were enjoying all the strange, exotic sights

around them as they slowly made their way from the outside to the center. At times, they'd stop at a booth to guess at the riddles within the lanterns, winning several more fish lanterns for Huangfu Rui to carry.

"Ah, come to think of it, I haven't thanked you for taking care of me when I was unconscious a while back, Xinyun." Breaking the silence, Bai Yunfei mentioned when he became a Soul Ancestor and was unconscious for two whole nights. While he didn't know what was happening during that time, he found out who took care of him later.

Though surprised, Tang Xinyun shook her head with a smile. "It's been awhile since then. Why bring that up now? There isn't anything to thank me for. If anything, I owe you for saving my life in the past!"

"Uh... what's with this tit-for-tat? I did help you, but I don't think it was that serious to say I saved your life..." Bai Yunfei honestly replied. "Well then, in either case, I still want to thank you. How about this, why don't you pick something out and I'll buy you it as thanks?"

"I..." She wanted to decline at first, but Bai Yunfei's earnest expression had convinced her otherwise. Thinking about it, she said with bright eyes, "Actually, I have something in mind."

"Oh? What is it? Please don't let it be anything too hard to find, I won't be able to buy it otherwise."

"Haha, you don't need to go looking for it since I already have it on me."

"It's already on you? What do you mean?"

With a shake of her hand, a single object appeared on her palm. "It's this."

Looking at the object, Bai Yunfei could see a wooden sculpture of a bird. The bird had both of its wings spread out wide and was

looking straight ahead with a slightly open beak.

It looked as if the bird was preparing to take flight with a cry ready to be emitted.

“That’s...” He didn’t know what he was looking at exactly, but the sculpture looked familiar. He just couldn’t put his finger on it.

“Did you forget?” Tang Xinyun smiled. “This was when we first met in Stonegroove City. You ‘forced’ this onto me, haha. You ran off right away, so I didn’t have time to give it back to you. I had it this entire time, but I only just remembered it now.”

“Stonegroove City?” Bai Yunfei asked. “Oh! I remember now! I only just bought that when I was in the city, but then Jing Mingfeng framed me with aunty Zhao... I was honestly confused back then, so I guess the sculpture ended up with you...”

The very mention of Jing Mingfeng’s name left Bai Yunfei’s eye with an involuntary itch. Even now, the thought of beating him up was very appealing; he had been a step away from certain disaster that time!

“Yes. Thinking about it now, our first encounter was... oh, well, I guess that was Jing Mingfeng. He took on your appearance, I remember...” Tang Xinyun covered the smile on her lips, “Why did he frame you, actually? I never learned the reason for that.”

“That... I was just extremely unlucky! When I first got to Stonegroove City...” Bai Yunfei began to regale the story of how he and Jing Mingfeng met to Tang Xinyun. He told her everything all the way too when he was framed.

After listening to his story, Tang Xinyun gave an admiring smile to Bai Yunfei, “Yunfei,” She whispered, “You’re a very generous person. Any other soul cultivator would definitely have made sure Jing Mingfeng wouldn’t do anything to them in the future. Even the more stone-hearted ones would probably have called for his head, but you... you became friends with him...”

“Haha... if I couldn’t get back my space ring, I’m sure I’d never be able to forgive him either. But I got it back, so no harm no foul. Why should I bear a grudge? He had a lapse in judgement, but I won’t hold that against him.

“Well, how do you feel about Jing Mingfeng?”

Thinking about the question, Tang Xinyun responded, “Well, Jing Mingfeng isn’t a bad person in all honesty; he’s actually a good friend, but people who’re like you are rare in the world. Maybe this is one of your good points.

“There might be people who think what you did was silly, but for me, that made me really li—”

Her words stopped, prompting Bai Yunfei to ask, “You really what?”

Tang Xinyun paused in her place. “I said... it made me really like how you do things...”

“Oh...”

“Brother strawhat, sis Yun, come quick! There’s a shining building over here!!”

At that moment, Huangfu Rui’s excited voice called out to the two of them. Looking up, the two saw Huangfu Rui several meters ahead. A half-eaten tanghulu was still in her hands, but it was forgotten by the entrancing sight in front of her.

Following her gaze, Bai Yunfei could see some sort of ‘tower’ in the middle of the Clearjade River. It shined bright with all sorts of colors. Since it was far away, the exact dimensions of the tower couldn’t really be determined, but there was at least a good few dozen meters between Bai Yunfei and the tower. The tower was shining with a light so bright that it shone for a hundred meters in every direction, an awe-inspiring sight.

Huangfu Rui’s curious gaze had been enough to make Bai Yunfei laugh, “Let’s go take a look.”

Tang Xinyun nodded her head, “Yes, let’s.”

As they walked, Bai Yunfei realized that they had already made it to the center of the city. There was a larger gathering of people on the roads next to the river compared to before. Thankfully, the roads were still wide enough to service all of the walkers without being congested.

Still, he shifted sideways and held his right hand out to his right to help Huangfu Rui and Tang Xinyun move forward without being stopped by anyone else on their way to the bridge.

As they approached, the three of them could finally see the giant building with greater clarity than before.

They could now see the lantern-adorned building the city called the ‘Lighthouse’!!

Chapter 241: A Competition

As they approached, the three of them could finally see the giant building with greater clarity than before.

They could now see the lantern-adorned building the city called the ‘Lighthouse’!!

These lanterns weren’t made of paper like the others. Instead, they had been made from a special type of crystal that had to have been custom made for this event. With how it was situated in the river, the tower looked as if it was floating over the water rather than being fastened to something underneath. Even more surprising was how the tower wasn’t shaking despite it being roughly a hundred meters above the water.

It was as steady as any other tower built on flat land.

At the very top of the tower was a spire with some sort of black cloth covering the point of it.

What confused Bai Yunfei about the sight was a series of ropes were attached to ten meters below the spire. They ran all the way down to the river where over a hundred strands of rope were tied to both sides of the bridge.

The vast majority of the tourists were mainly centered around the bridge or on the shores. As they gazed up at the tower, each one of them pointed and talked to one another about it.

“What a huge lantern! I thought it was a house at first! Brother strawhat, look at how big it is! Can we bring it home?” Huangfu Rui looked first at the small lantern she had in her hand before looking at the huge lantern up above. She then turned her head to look back at Bai Yunfei.

“.....”

As sweat dripped, Bai Yunfei thought, “If you want it so badly, just put it in your space ring, but are they going to let you take it?”

At that moment, there was a distant cry. Looking up, Bai Yunfei saw a robust-looking person jump from the moonlit bridge onto the rope connecting the bridge to the spire. Then, as if he was walking on an incline, the figure began to run up to the top.

The eyebrows on Bai Yunfei's face rose. Only mid-stage Soul Warriors could accomplish a feat like this.

As soon as the person reached the top, he turned around to salute everyone down below. That was when Bai Yunfei saw that the person was a man in his thirties.

Regaling everyone, the man spoke with a sonorous voice, "Ladies and gentleman!! I am Shi Lan, your host for tonight's events! Tonight, we have a very special program for everyone, so please enjoy tonight to the best of your ability!"

Each person down below had a curious expression, the man continued to say, "This program shall be known as the 'Scramble for the Lantern!' Any interested participants will try their best to find and grab the winning lantern. The winner will be the one who grabs it, and the prize will be... this!"

His right hand tore off the black cloth that had wrapped around the point of the spire.

"Aaaaah!"

The resulting sight had been enough for everyone in the audience to let out a cry in surprise; Bai Yunfei himself had let out a gasp. Both of Tang Xinyun's eyes had lit up with interest, and Huangfu Rui let out an excited cry while her eyes immediately lit up like two mini-stars.

Uncovered by the black cloth, everyone could now see a lotus-shaped lantern glowing brightly with all seven colors of the rainbow at the tip of the spire. The lantern was crystalline in material, and a single multi-colored crystal could be seen in the center. The light was coming from this crystal and radiated

through each individual ‘petal’ of the lotus. The light encompassed the entire area around the lotus in a dream-like fashion.

When the lantern was revealed, all the other lanterns seemed to have lost their luster. Only this new lantern looked as bright as a star.

“This lantern is known as the ‘Prisma Lantern.’ It took tens of artisans to craft this masterpiece over a course of thirty days. At the very center of it is a very precious multi-colored stone! Though it isn’t a rare treasure, it is still a very unique lantern!” Shi Lan pointed at it, “The rules for this competition are simple. There are a total of one hundred eighteen ropes tied to three of the four faces to this tower. All you have to do is climb one of the ropes and reach the top. First one there is the victor!

“These ropes are of very sturdy make, so don’t be afraid of them breaking! The tower has been reinforced many times over along with its foundation, so there won’t be any problems on that side either. If you fall into the water and don’t know how to swim, we’ll have people stationed around to save you, so there is no harm to be had!

“Gentleman! Take a look at the eyes of the women nearby she’ll be the most fortunate woman tonight if you can win this lantern and gift it to her!!”

An immediate uproar followed this final reminder from all over—many of the males were confident in their abilities.

The vast majority of the people here were all young couples, so what kind of male wouldn’t want to see a smile on the face of the one they loved?

“How beautiful... sis Yun, is that really a lantern? It looks more like a lotus! It’s really beautiful!!” Huangfu Rui tugged at Tang Xinyun’s robes in excitement.

Even Tang Xinyun had a look of interest in her eyes when she

glanced at the lantern. “Yes, it really is quite beautiful...”

Bai Yunfei hesitated at first, but when he saw the two females interest in it, he suggested, “Then... how about I get it for you two?”

The moment Huangfu Rui heard his words, she let out an excited yelp, “Okay! Yes! Brother strawhat, go get it! I want it—oh! I mean, sis Yun likes it too! Give it to sis Yun!”

Surprised, Tang Xinyun pinched the adorable face of Huangfu Rui dotingly, “Haha, so what if I do. Plenty of others want it as well!”

She looked at Bai Yunfei, “Why not let the commoners take part? If you were to go, you’d be bullying the others...”

Thinking about it, Bai Yunfei offered, “No worries, I just won’t use my soulforce. I’ll just use my own physical aptitude; that’ll even the playing field and make it less likely that I will win.”

“In... in that case, please be careful and don’t hurt anyone.” Tang Xinyun relented after hesitating for a brief moment.

Bai Yunfei didn’t know what to say. In times like this, shouldn’t it be, ‘be careful and don’t get hurt’?

After ten minutes had passed, to allow many of the participants to line themselves up by the ropes, Shi Lan gave a smile to everyone. Holding up a stone, he announced, “When this stone hits the waters, the competition will officially begin! Gentleman, for the sake of earning favor with the beautiful women of tonight, do your best! Show off the best of your ability and let everyone see how svelte you are!”

He tossed the stone up into the air. As the stone began to arc back down, he jumped off to the shore.

By the time he reached the shore, the stone he had thrown had coincidentally plopped into the water.

“Oh!”

“Wah!”

“Splash! Splash! Splash...”

Barely seconds into the start, three distinct sounds could already be heard.

The first shout had been from the excitement of the participants when they heard the competition start.

The second shout was from surprise.

The third was the sound of several people falling into the water.

At the same time, thirty people were already starting to leap onto the ropes to run straight for the top.

That’s right, the best way up was to run up the ropes!

Not a single person here had imagined that this ‘rope climbing’ event would suddenly develop into this!

These nimble young participants were already under close watch by the entire audience, but just seconds later when they progressed up the ropes, the audience began to let out even more excited shouts!

Several of the ropes were starting to get close to one another, meaning that the people on them were starting to fight one another!

There were a few participants who had been prepared to climb up the ropes by hugging onto them upside down. When they saw people running up the ropes, they were all stunned for a moment.

Silently, they returned to the shores and entered the ranks of the audience; even the ones who had been startled by the ‘experts’ and had fallen into the water were starting to make their way back to dry land where they could watch this startling situation.

Bai Yunfei hadn’t even started to climb the rope when he saw all

of this unfurrow in front of him.

“What the fuck!? They’re all soul cultivators! This is a carnival meant for the commoners, why are so many soul cultivators taking part!?”

“Brother strawhat, what are you doing! Hurry up! Grab that lantern!!”

Huangfu Rui’s shout jolted Bai Yunfei out of his stupor. Giving one final look at the battling people on top of the ropes, Bai Yunfei smiled to Huangfu Rui and Tang Xinyun one more time before leaping up onto a rope.

Chapter 242: How Coincidental!

The ropes were at first spread out from one another, but the closer one got to the spire, the closer the ropes got to one another. Where the spire rose, all of the ropes were practically touching one another, meaning the participants would have to be clumped together as well.

Bai Yunfei was on top of one of the ropes to the right, but there were already thirteen soul cultivators in the middle of fighting one another.

None of these people were experts; the strongest one of them was only a late-stage Soul Personage. All of them were young in age, so presumably, they were joining in on this competition for the sake of winning a smile from whichever woman they were here with.

Soul cultivators were people too. They had both emotions and lives of their own, especially when in their prime. If they were with a female companion, they would, of course, try to show off their strength.

After several fights, two of the few people had been knocked into the water. As the Soul Apprentices realized that they were useless against the other soul cultivators, they started to break away from the fight so that three mid-stage Soul Personages and one late-stage Soul Personage could fight each other. The other four mid-stage Soul Personages on the other hand, continued to run up the ropes unimpeded by anyone else.

Several people in the audience let out surprised shouts at the appearance of Bai Yunfei. This in turn led to other people looking at the brave newcomer that was willing to still run up a rope.

“Hey, look! There’s a person that’s trying to run up still!”

“Ahhh? There’s already plenty of strong soul cultivators up there, and a youth like him is still going up? Hasn’t he realized that

he has no chance?”

“But that kid isn’t half-bad from the looks of things. He might just be equally amazing.”

“Pft! Look at how old he is, twenty maybe? Look at how many Soul Personages are over there, I bet you that wet-eared kid doesn’t know where he stands.”

“Look! He’s already over with the others!”

.....

While everyone down below was talking about him, Bai Yunfei was already progressing steadily up the rope. It wasn’t until he was halfway up that the people fighting started to notice him. Each one of the fighters thought themselves to be strong already, so they didn’t think Bai Yunfei to be anyone special. Many of them couldn’t even see how strong he was.

“Little brother, you can’t possibly win this lantern. Save yourself the trouble and go back down!” The outermost Soul Personage called out to Bai Yunfei as he moved to push Bai Yunfei over.

He had been ‘kind’ in his push, rather than being full of contempt like many others. Everyone was here for fun and for enjoyment, not for a fight to the death. There was no need to make a new enemy tonight.

Smiling in thanks, Bai Yunfei replied, “Haha, thank you for your concern, brother, but I too wish to win this lantern. Please go down first.”

Even as he spoke, Bai Yunfei’s right hand grabbed onto the other person’s outstretched hand. Bai Yunfei pulled the man away from his rope and down toward the shore below.

It wasn’t until the man crashed into the waters below that he realized what in the world happened.

This unforeseen development had led to surprise from the other

soul cultivators. Stopping in what they were doing, each one of them stared at Bai Yunfei in shock.

Although Bai Yunfei said he wouldn't use soulforce to take part in a competition meant for commoners, this was anything but that now.

Only soul cultivators were left in this competition, so he naturally wouldn't pretend the other participants were commoners. As Bai Yunfei made his way up, he looked at the seven remaining soul cultivators with a smile. "Gentlemen, remember that this is a cheerful competition. Please remember to be polite and don't overdo it."

His actions just then were enough for the other participants to see him as a threat. Cautiously, they all started to shift away from him.

There were two people on the right that were companions with one another, so when they heard what Bai Yunfei said, one of them laughed out loud. "Haha, little brother, you're absolutely right! We are here to have fun, so the fact that we were able to meet this many soul cultivators here makes the trip worth it! Little brother, you're a strong one; why don't you and us exchange some notes!"

Then they nodded at one another before charging at Bai Yunfei. One person grabbed Bai Yunfei's shoulder while the other one moved to sweep at his legs.

The teamwork between the two was quite excellent.

Still smiling, Bai Yunfei's foot shifted a bit before moving to the side in a calm and collected manner. Managing to dodge the two strikes perfectly, Bai Yunfei's right hand slapped against another rope to allow him to rebound back. As the person on the right was bringing his hand back, Bai Yunfei managed to grab hold of him.

Pulling before then pushing him away, Bai Yunfei made his soulforce envelop the man, forcing him to fly toward his

companion and smash against one another.

His movements had been fast enough for the first man to not realize a thing. All he felt was a tightening sensation around his right arm before he was sent flying backward. Then, he was falling down to the water below with his companion.

“.....”

Only an instant had passed before the two men had fallen from their ropes, causing the audience to stare at Bai Yunfei in complete shock.

No longer caring to be polite, Bai Yunfei let out a warning shout before he flew toward the remaining few people.

The next battle had been completely lackluster in suspense. Even though everyone grouped up against him in the end, all it took was a few short exchanges before they were all thrown into the water, and Bai Yunfei was being lenient.

The emotions of the audience had already reached a fervor by this point. When would they ever see such a glorious battle on any other day of their lives? Completely captivated by the sight in front of them, both sides of the audience were completely quiet as they watched.

While Bai Yunfei was climbing up the ropes from his side of the tower, two people were climbing up the other two sides of ropes attached to the tower.

As soon as the three people met, they all let out startled cries, “It’s you?!”

The other two had been Ye Zhiqiu and Fei Nian!!

Since this was only a small ‘competition,’ Bai Yunfei didn’t think it was worth it to spread his souldsense.

He also hadn’t paid attention to the other sides, so he didn’t realize that he’d meet these two here.

“Ye Zhiqu, Fei Nian, so you two are here. How coincidental...”

“Yunfei, Fei Nian, you two came here too...?” Ye Zhiqu spoke in embarrassment.

Fei Nian spoke up next, “Isn’t that what I should be saying? How did you guys get here?”

Looking off to the side of the shore where Fei Nian and Ye Zhiqu came from, Bai Yunfei could see Sima Yue and Ling Yiyi both looking up from where they were. From there, Bai Yunfei realized what was going on.

“.....”

The three of them were silent and slightly embarrassed.

The Prisma Lantern was right in front of the three of them with a bright luster. The surrounding audience could see the situation, so they started to cheer on the last three participants to put on a good show.

Participating in this competition meant that they all wanted to win the lantern.

With the three of them here, what should they do, fight?

“Well... what should we do, fight for it?” Bai Yunfei asked the other two with a smile.

“Ugh, what is the point? Ye Zhiqu isn’t even a Soul Ancestor, and we’d still be no match against you even if we paired up...” Fei Nian threw up his hands in despair. “I didn’t think that Yunfei would join this competition too; are you going to give it to junior Tang? Have you two already gotten that far? How amazing; it took me three years to finally get this far with Xiao Yue! Ye Zhiqu, you’re amazing too... though I heard that plenty of juniors are quite jealous of what’s going on between you and senior Ling, hehe...”

Fei Nian’s words left Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqu somewhat

embarrassed, causing Bai Yunfei to clear his throat. “Well... actually... Xinyun and I aren’t...”

“Okay okay, I get it.” Fei Nian nodded. “‘Aren’t my ass! I know better, so I won’t fight you for it. Fuck it, just take it. It’s just a silly lantern to me, but damn if they aren’t destructive to a woman...”

“...” Bai Yunfei was speechless. Fei Nian was only making the situation worse with what he was saying. Looking to Ye Zhiqiu, he said, “Zhiqiu, why don’t you take it back to Ling Yiyi then.”

Giving a cursory glance to Ling Yiyi at first, and then Tang Xinyun and Sima Yue, he shook his head. “Forget it. Yunfei, you take it. Since this is a competition, neither of us are stronger than you; that means you win by default.”

“I...” Bai Yunfei was just about to say something when all of a sudden, something came flying from behind Bai Yunfei, causing the three of them to look startled.

“Crash!”

A light crackling sound was heard as a black metallic chain was thrown forward. In no time at all, it wrapped around the lantern before being pulled back!

Right in front of everyone’s startled eyes, the Prisma Lantern shot off like a shooting star toward the shore!

Chapter 243: The Strength of Xiao Rourou!

Right in front of everyone's startled eyes, the Prisma Lantern shot off like a shooting star toward the shore!

“Whoosh!”

Just ten meters after the Prisma Lantern was sent flying, a golden rope immediately looped around it with the dexterity of a snake. Tightening, the rope then stretched taut against the chain. The lantern was now suspended in mid-air.

On top of the tower, Bai Yunfei's left hand held the Compliant Rope as he looked down at the bridge. “Friend, what is the meaning of this?”

By now, everyone was already looking to the other end of the chain. They saw a dark-skinned man standing by the shores. He was extremely muscular, like a boulder almost, and his skin gave a dark bronze gleam as he held onto the chain with his hands. Like everyone else, this man was surprised to see what had happened.

Another twenty-four or twenty-five-year-old man stood beside this person. In his right hand was a fan and in his left hand was the hand of a pretty young woman. He too was surprised to see the deadlock that was happening up above.

For two seconds, the male did nothing, but then his face hardened as he demanded, “Tie Nu, what's the holdup? Didn't you hear what I said? Hurry up and bring that lantern to me at once!”

“Yes, young master!”

The one called ‘Tie Nu’ responded. His muscles bulged out from exertion as he glared balefully at Bai Yunfei. With a mighty pull of his right hand, soulforce began to blaze out of his body, causing everyone else around him to step ten meters back.

“Late-stage Soul Ancestor!!”

Bai Yunfei and the other two cried out loud. When Bai Yunfei felt the drag from the Compliant Rope, his heart skipped a beat. He couldn't exactly resist; if he were to pull back on the rope, the Prisma Lantern would shatter under the pressure.

Relaxing the grip of his left hand, Bai Yunfei had the Compliant Rope slacken so that it'd let go of the chain. It returned to wrap around his arm.

With the lantern successfully taken by the other man, he untied it from the chain and gave it to the young man with a smile. A faint green light started to pick up around the lantern as it then descended to the young man's hands.

Giving the lantern to the woman leaning on his shoulder, the young man smiled, "How about it? Didn't I say that I'd win it for you? Take it, it's yours!"

"Heehee, I just knew master Luo is amazing!" The woman squealed in joy as she accepted the lantern before snuggling up close to him.

The young man smiled as he hooked his left hand around the woman's waist. "Well then, there's nothing else to this festival, let's go back to the inn."

"Master Luo wishes to rest? Then, when we go back, allow this servant serve you well..."

Disregarding everyone else, he and the two others turned away to leave.

"Hey! You're being far too cocky! You think you can leave just like that after stealing the lantern!?"

No sooner did he turn around than someone's angry voice called out. Turning his head, the man could see that Bai Yunfei and the other two had returned to the shore by now and were walking toward him. It had been Fei Nian who had called out.

The young man cast a glance over to Fei Nian, "What? You got a

problem?”

“No kidding!” Fei Nian spat. “This lantern was a prize for the competition. What right have you to steal it like that!?”

“It was just a lantern, and it was a competition of skill to begin with. You were weak, so I took the lantern. What problem is there for me to take it?”

“What an unreasonable person you are. You didn’t even comply with the rules of the argument, so how can you say you followed the rules of the competition!?”

Snorting, the man glared at first Fei Nian and then the others, “I took it now, and you still have a problem?”

“You!!”

Fei Nian had been speechless by how illogical this person was that he didn’t even know how to even start to talk to the man.

By Fei Nian’s side was Bai Yunfei. He stared at the young man with a questioning gaze. The young man wasn’t weak by any means; he was an early-stage Soul Ancestor, and the burly man next to him was a late-stage Soul Ancestor. With strength like that, he surely had to belong to some major household.

Everyone was silent, but it was Huangfu Rui who spoke up first in anger. Pointing the tanghulu bamboo skewer at the young man, she spouted in anger, “You ugly idiot! You didn’t even fight in the competition but you took the lantern! That was supposed to be brother strawhat’s gift to sis Yun!!”

“Uh...” The young man took a step back to glare at Huangfu Rui, “Who let this feral little girl in? What reason is there for a little girl to try and tell me what to do?”

Growing even more angry, Huangfu Rui yelled, “I’m not a feral little girl! My name is Huangfu Rui, and I’ll be seventeen this year! Mother said that people should be polite; otherwise, people will say you had no upbringing!”

“...” Though everyone was quiet, they couldn’t help but smile in secret to themselves. Was this girl implying that the other person had no upbringing?

“You!!” The young man snarled at first, but when he managed to get a better view of Huangfu Rui, he started to sneer. “Seventeen years old? Haha! So you really are some feral little girl then! Not only that, but you’ve got a problem with your head, what a stu—”

“Shut your mouth!!” Fei Nian snarled, interrupting the man in anger. Soulfence began to slough off his body as he dove toward the man, but even before he could get close, Bai Yunfei’s hand stopped him.

Even Bai Yunfei looked grim by this point, but he managed to level a calm glare at the young man, “We won’t argue about the lantern, but apologize for what you just said at once.”

The young man was surprised to see that there was such an uproar over what he said, but that didn’t stop him from letting out a final jeer, “Who do you all think you are? How dare you speak to me that way! Was I wrong? This girl is not only cheap, she’s a s—”

“Bang!!”

There was a muffled sound that resonated through the area as the young man was sent flying back like a cannon ball. With a boom, he slammed into the stone railings of the bridge several meters away. There was another cracking sound as the railings gave way, and he slammed into the next set of railings on the other side of the bridge, rendering him safe from falling into the water.

“.....”

The entire area grew dead silent as the events of what happened registered in their minds. Bai Yunfei and Fei Nian had been ready to take action, so was the one named Tie Nu. However, even they were surprised by what happened.

“Clack.”

A small red figure dropped down onto the stone-tiled ground. The sound wasn't too loud in reality, but the echo was loud enough to send shockwaves through everyone's hearts.

Its entire body was glowing the bright red flames of elemental fire. On its head were two large ears as it stood up on its hind two legs like a human. Its forelimbs bulged as if they contained some sort of explosive power. It was Huangfu Rui's soulbeast partner, Xiao Rourou!

No.

It'd be unfitting to call it by this name.

It was the... red magiboar!!

The red magiboar looked wrathful as it stared at the mess that was the young man... there was even a slight tint of killing intent in its eyes!

“Young master!”

Finally realizing the situation at hand, Tie Nu let out a cry before flying to his master's side in a flash of golden light. A vacant look of shock was on the injured man's face as blood started to leak out of his mouth, and his complexion was draining of color.

“Young master! Are you alright!?” Tie Nu grabbed onto his arm and began to transmit his soulforce to alleviate some of his wounds.

“Hak! Hahh... bast—bastard!!” He spat out in between coughs. Glaring at the red magiboar in front of Bai Yunfei's group, he snarled, “A soulbeast... kill it! Kill it! Tie Nu, I order you to kill it!!”

“Young master... we shouldn't be...” Seeing that his charge wasn't in serious danger, Tie Nu let a sigh escape from him in secret, but even as he spoke, something came at them suddenly, causing him to cry out in surprise, “Watch out!!”

At the same time, Tie Nu pushed the young master out of the way

right as the aura of a late-stage Soul Ancestor came crashing down onto them. The black chain wrapped around his right arm began to crackle as it glittered with light.

With a final invocation, the chain flew forward!

The red magiboar was charging straight toward him with the speed of a red lightning bolt!

As the chain unfurled, it formed a giant drill-shaped point at the very front. With a shake of his right hand, the chain flew at the charging Red Magiboar. With a burst of golden light, the chain started to radiate light; this was a desperate move done against a being of the late-stage Soul Ancestor level!

Leaping up, the red magiboar made no move to dodge the chain's path. Its right hind leg (or hoof?) exploded into a burst of red light as elemental fire started to manifest on its fist (hoof?). In no weak display of strength, it clashed with the golden chain!

“Clang!!”

As the two ‘points’ of each opposing force collided, there was an ear-piercing sound of metal hitting metal. Then, as the golden light started to disperse, the chain behind it started to crumble and shatter into countless of pieces!!

Under Tie Nu's shocked eyes, the red magiboar's hoof smashed into his fist.

There was a cracking sound before Tie Nu's arm began to distort and bend heavily in on itself. In the next second, Tie Nu's face went red as blood came spurting out of his mouth.

Shock filled his eyes, but before he could do anything, the red magiboar suddenly disappeared from his sight!

In a flash of red, the red magiboar then appeared right in front of the young man Tie Nu was protecting. Whirling around in mid-air, the red magiboar's hind leg then smashed onto the man's back!

“Bang!”

There was another muffled sound as the man spat out a large mouthful of blood. Following the momentum of the blow, he was sent spiraling into the air before landing ruthlessly right in front of Bai Yunfei and the others!

Chapter 244: The House of Xing From the Northern Ridge Province

“Young master!!”

All the color bled away from Tie Nu’s face. He had a look of fear as he looked at the red magiboar.

If a late-stage Soul Ancestor revealed fear on his face, then it could clearly be called a very stressful moment.

Just as he thought about rushing to his young master’s side, the red magiboar was already gone in another blaze of red. Beating Tie Nu to the punch, the red magiboar’s hoof immediately slammed down on the young man’s head!!

“Bang!”

The young man’s head sank halfway into the ground—almost knocking him out from the impact. As an early-stage Soul Ancestor, the young man’s head wouldn’t split open from such a blow, but it’d at the very least blur his vision, and with the injuries he already had, his health was already quite low.

“Don’t hurt him!” Tie Nu cried out loud, but he didn’t take another step forward. He was far too afraid of being the next target of the red magiboar.

“A late-stage fifth-tier soulbeast... a sentient one, at that! Dammit, dammit all! How could it be that strong? Is it some sort of mutant soulbeast!?” Tie Nu thought to himself in fear as his mind raced furiously to try and figure out a way to save his young master.

Today was already the day that would mark his unemployment, but if the young master were to die, then there’d be no need for Tie Nu to report back to the family. He may as well commit suicide here and now.

“.....”

It was with surprise that Bai Yunfei looked at the red magiboar. Up until now, his entire mind was in a state of flux, as if there was a boar running around in circles in his head. He had absolutely no confidence since he had watched each blow that had transpired within these past few seconds.

In just a few moves, a late-stage Soul Ancestor had been completely beaten!

And so was the early-stage Soul Ancestor. Up against the boar, the two of them had simply no chance at all to retaliate!

It wasn't just him. Ye Zhiqiu, Tang Xinyun, and the others were all staring at the red magiboar in shock. The audience around them were even worse—many of them had probably thought they were in some sort of dream or saw some sort of ghost.

“You... what do you want! What will it take to let the young master go!”

The red magiboar was stepping harshly on the back of the young man, eliciting several bone-cracking sounds before Tie Nu finally yelled out. He didn't dare do anything rash now, so he had to ask Bai Yunfei and the others for their demands.

Everyone looked at Bai Yunfei like he was the principal decision maker of the group.

Bai Yunfei first looked to the red magiboar as it ‘assaulted’ the young master on the ground and then to the pain-filled face of the man before thinking about the best way to resolve this problem.

At the same time, the sound of hurried footsteps could be heard from the right side of the crowd, causing the audience to make way. As soon as the audience split, Sima Dong, Mo Xiaoxuan, and the others could be seen. Even the middle-aged man named Shi Lan could be seen by Sima Dong's side, whispering to him in a low voice.

Right behind Sima Dong was a tall and skinny young boy who looked to be around fourteen years old. Originally, the boy's facial expression had been apathetic, but when he saw the red magiboar and the state Tie Nu was in, shock started to register on his face. Inching closer to Sima Dong, a guarded look began to creep up his face.

Glancing around, Sima Dong quickly came to a quick realization of the situation. Subduing his inner shock, he walked up to Bai Yunfei,

“Brother Bai, what's going on?” He asked in a grim tone.

“Hehe, nothing, just a small dispute, that's all. Brother Sima, there's no need to be concerned.” Bai Yunfei casually replied, but his eyes continued to glance over to Tie Nu as if afraid that another clash might happen.

A small dispute...

It was almost unnoticeable, the corners of Sima Dong's mouth twitched just slightly as if he wanted to say, “Your soulbeast has an early-stage Soul Ancestor under its feet and a late-stage Soul Ancestor that's far too afraid to even move. You call that a ‘small dispute’??”

“Friend, I am Sima Dong, son of Sima Wenhao. Might I inquire who you are...?” Sima Dong turned to Tie Nu to greet him politely.

While Shi Lan reported what had already happened to him, Sima Dong still wanted to at the very least confirm everyone's identities before a solution could be made.

Sima Dong's appearance had given Tie Nu a chance to finally let out a sigh of relief. Cupping his hands in greeting, the man said, “Master Sima, we are from the house of Xing of Ventia City in the Northern Ridge Province. This is the second heir to the house, Xing Luo.”

“The house of Xing from the Northern Ridge Province?” Sima

Dong's eyebrows rose up on his face from shock. Thinking hard about the situation, he then said, "I've heard the gist of the situation, but no matter the case, I'm sure none of us want to make a mountain out of this molehill. These are disciples of the internal school of the Crafting School and are my friends as well. Would it be possible for the house of Xing to show my house of Sima some face and have this matter drop where it stands?"

"The Crafting School!" Tie Nu's face contorted in on itself as he thought about the implications, but then the thought of saving his young charge resurfaced, "If master Sima's friends could let my young master go, we'll leave at once!!"

Turning to Bai Yunfei, Sima Dong said, "Brother Bai, please give me some face as well and let this matter drop, okay?"

Now that Sima Dong was mediating the conflict, Bai Yunfei was far too lazy to do any more problem solving by himself. Looking to Xing Luo, Bai Yunfei couldn't help but think that he had already suffered enough, so no more was needed. "He has learned his lesson for putting his needs in front of others. We'll let this matter drop then." He nodded.

He then looked to Huangfu Rui, "Doraemon, you've had your fun, let Xiao Rourou come back now."

"Oh... okay." Huangfu Rui nodded her head obediently before calling out to Xiao Rourou, "Xiao Rourou, come back. That bully has learned his lesson. I'm not angry anymore!"

Since she looked bewildered at the scene, Bai Yunfei had thought that she wasn't aware of what was going on, but as it turns out, she knew that Xiao Rourou was teaching Xing Luo a lesson!

The red magiboar had been ignoring even Sima Dong when he first walked in, but when Huangfu Rui called out to it, it brought its right foot up before turning its head to glare balefully to Tie Nu. In a flash of light, it returned to Huangfu Rui's leg in its original white-skinned appearance.

Flashing to Xing Luo's side with a wary glance at Bai Yunfei, Tie Nu moved to pick up Xing Luo when he realized that when the red magiboar slammed into him with one of its hooves, his right arm had been completely broken. A hundred days of recuperation would hardly be enough to heal a wound like this, but at least it wasn't life-threatening or crippling.

Ashen-faced from the pain, Tie Nu managed to speak to Sima Dong in between grit teeth, "Master Sima, this one will be taking my leave then!!"

There were no final remarks like 'I'll remember this day, the house of Xing will not let this matter stand.' Tie Nu had simply just left the area with Xing Luo along with the woman Xing Luo had with him in tow. As she rose to follow the two, her legs could still be seen quaking. Not even bothering to look behind, she and the other two disappeared into the crowd and out of sight.

It wasn't until Bai Yunfei couldn't sense Tie Nu's presence that Bai Yunfei let out a sigh of relief. He looked calm on the surface, but he was practically on edge to the extreme; the person he was putting a bravado against was a late-stage Soul Ancestor after all!

If a fight broke out, not only would he lose for sure, but Bai Yunfei's friends would surely come into harm's way as well. This was not something he'd want to happen.

There was, however, a beneficial point to today's events. What he saw of the red magiboar's strengths, his senior's high praise wasn't completely full of hot air!

"Brother Bai, are you alright?"

Sima Dong's question broke Bai Yunfei's train of thought, allowing him to shake his head in response to him. "I'm fine, but I apologize for making a scene for brother Sima."

"Now now, please don't say that. You all came here to Redfire City to have fun. I was the one who invited you all to come see the

festival, but to have an incident like this occur on my watch shows my lack of hospitality. It's fortunate that nothing happened; otherwise, my father would surely punish me if he found out, haha..."

Bai Yunfei glanced at Shi Lan with a suspicious look, "Then this festival..."

Sima Dong nodded, "I'm sorry to make light of brother Bai's efforts, but this festival was merely something I had set up on a whim for the people of the city to enjoy themselves..."

So that was the case. Not once did Bai Yunfei think that Sima Dong would have such a carefree side like this to him.

Thinking about the situation even more, Bai Yunfei asked, "Brother Sima, about those two, they said they were from the house of Xing from Ventia City in the Northern Ridge Province..."

"Haha, there's no need to worry, brother Bai. I'm sure that no problems will arise from this." Sima Dong must have known what Bai Yunfei was talking about since he continued to say, "The Northern Ridge Province is one of the smaller provinces up in the north. The house of Xing is the biggest faction of the Northern Ridge Province, but that is where their influence ends. They might be one of the middling factions in the scale of the entire continent, but compared to the Crafting School, they've no power to fight with."

"The biggest faction in the Northern Ridge Province..."

Bai Yunfei nodded his head as if content with what he was told, but then, another thought occurred to him, "Brother Sima, if I could talk to you about something..."

Chapter 245: Take It All!

Huangfu Rui came scampering up with the Prisma Lantern held up high above her head. Blowing some dust away from her face triumphantly, she held the lantern out to Bai Yunfei just as he finished talking to Sima Dong, “Brother strawhat, the lantern is ours! Hurry up and give it to sis Yun!”

“Uh...” Bai Yunfei was at a loss. Noticing the mischievous looks Ye Zhiqiu and the others were giving him, he scratched the back of his head out of embarrassment. “Haha, since your soulbeast was the one who took the lantern, you should be the one to give it to sister Yun!”

“Wasn’t brother strawhat going to give this to sis Yun when he won? Why am I the one giving it to her?” Huangfu Rui shook her head in confusion.

“Well... that’s because I didn’t win it. Haha, it’s in your hands now, meaning you’re the one who won. You’re the victor of the competition!” Bai Yunfei swiftly came up with an explanation.

Huangfu Rui’s face visibly brightened up at that, “Really? Dai Dai won?”

Bai Yunfei solemnly nodded his head, “Yes, you did.”

“Heehee, really!? That’s awesome!! I’m the winner!!” Huangfu Rui twirled around in excitement before running off to give the lantern to Tang Xinyun. “Sis Yun, I won this for you!”

Smiling, Tang Xinyun replied, “Haha, if Xiao Rui likes it so much, she should keep it.”

But Huangfu Rui shook her head, “No! I wanted to give this to sis Yun, so let me give it!”

“Haha, okay then, I’ll take it.” Tang Xinyun pinched Huangfu Rui’s nose affectionately before taking the lantern.

“Tsk! If you’re going to give it, just give it! There’s no need to have junior Rui give it for you...” Fei Nian muttered off to the side. He was clearly poking fun at Bai Yunfei feeling embarrassed about giving the lantern to Tang Xinyun.

Though Bai Yunfei wanted to explain that there was nothing between he and Tang Xinyun, he felt that trying to explain would only make the matter worse. The best action to do right now would be to simply pretend he didn’t hear Fei Nian.

What he didn’t know was that everyone took his silence as a sign of approval.

“We’ve played enough for today. We should head back to rest for the night and see what else there is to do tomorrow.” Tang Xinyun advocated to the rest of the group. Since there was still plenty of people around them, she spoke in a quiet voice and was quite ready to move away from the people.

Ye Zhiqiu nodded his head as well. “I agree. We should get out of here. We don’t get anything out of staying here besides being used as entertainment for everyone else.”

One by one, the others nodded their heads; it seemed as if everyone else agreed that they felt limited by being watched here.

Sima Dong then asked, “Does everyone wish to rest now then? I’ve already reserved some of the finest rooms in the best inn in the city. Allow me to escort you all there.”

With no further obstacles, everyone gave their thanks to Sima Dong and prepared to leave.

“Oh, one second. I’ve still something I’d like to do.” Bai Yunfei suddenly called out before then speaking to Huangfu Rui. “Doraemon, I’ve a gift to give to you.”

“Ah?” Huangfu Rui was confused, but her confusion then gave way to excitement. “What is it? What is it? I’ve another present?”

“Haha, didn’t you say you wanted this before? I’ve already made

the arrangements with lord Sima who agreed with me. Give me a second and I'll bring this with us.”

Under the curious eyes of everyone else, Bai Yunfei leaped into the air. His Compliant Rope helped him traverse the water to the top of the lighthouse. With a wave of his right hand, a single blade made of fire extended out from his fingers. Cutting the ropes that connected the tower to the bridge, Bai Yunfei then placed a single hand on the foundation of the tower. With a single punch, he made a clean break from the lighthouse to the foundation beneath!

Right as the topmost part was starting to slant, Bai Yunfei's right hand immediately waved right in front of it. There was a faint shimmer before the bridge suddenly looked brighter than before.

The gigantic lighthouse had been placed in Bai Yunfei's space ring!!

Landing back down on the shore, Bai Yunfei returned everyone's stunned looks with a smile. Turning to Huangfu Rui to wink, he said, “Doraemon, didn't you say you wanted to bring it home? I'll have this placed in your courtyard when we get back, alright?”

Two bright stars immediately lit up her eyes at that proposal. “Haha! Really? Can I really take that thing home?”

“Haha, of course! Haven't I already taken it? Brother Sima has already agreed that I can take it.”

“Heehee, brother strawhat, you're the best!! Brother Sima is nice too!” The girl nodded her head.

“Ha... haha...” Sima Dong gave a vacant smile; this must've been the very first time he'd been called a nice guy in such a manner.

“Well then, let's be on our way. Today has been a tiring one; we can continue our festivities tomorrow.”

“Okay!”

.....

For the next two days, Sima Dong played host to Bai Yunfei and his group. He led them to each and every enjoyable spot in Redfire City before the group had to return to the Crafting School.

Barely even a few days after they returned, Tang Xinyun was taken by Cang Yu away from Mt. Crimson. It was said that she was accompanying her master to take care of several matters in the Black Mountain Province and gain some experience.

As for the others, Ye Zhiqiu closed himself off so that he could concentrate on breaking through to the Soul Ancestor stage. Both Mo Xiaoxuan and Xi Yan were preparing to consolidate their essence fireseed and craft their own soulbound armament when they grew to Soul Sprites.

On the other hand, Bai Yunfei had thrown himself back into his studies of the art of crafting. He wasn't neglecting everything and everyone like before, but other than the occasional break, he'd spend the rest of his time in the crafting caves.

Creating a mid-earth tier soul armament was beyond Bai Yunfei's capabilities, and he was aware of that fact for the most part. Thus, he spent the majority of his time improving his fundamentals and trying his best to increase the attack of every soul armament he made in hopes that he'd be able to reach the mid-earth tier boundary sooner.

One thing worth mentioning was the fact that crafting an offensive soul armament was completely different than crafting a defensive soul armament. Soft leather equipment and gloves for example had a distinction in the choice of materials. Then there was a difference on how the end product was made. Sometimes, it wouldn't even need to be refined and could be made simply with the pure products of nature. In the Crafting School, defensive soul armaments were quite low in 'output' as the majority of students preferred to craft weapons.

For those reasons, Bai Yunfei decided not to study how to craft

defensive soul armaments just yet. It'd be best for him to focus on crafting offensive ones first.

The weapons Bai Yunfei was making now weren't as varied as they used to be. All of the ones he was crafting were of a single category: throwing knives.

That's right. He was recreating the throwing knives from the designs he found in the incomplete manual.

The very first designs from the manual were the most basic and compact knives. Despite that, it took half a month before Bai Yunfei was able to craft a dozen of them. Their weapon grades were merely high-human at best and were all without an affinity. (Equipment made with materials that'd lead to having an affinity were far more complex and difficult to craft).

The other two designs he tried to recreate were even more complex. Far more time was spent on the designs and research, but Bai Yunfei was never able to craft a throwing knife that satisfied the criteria the manual described.

To make matters even worse, the manuals didn't have any written information on how to properly use the throwing knives. With no other choice, Bai Yunfei had to attempt the most basic ways of throwing them. He had high hopes that he'd be able to find the 'proper' way to throw them, but it was with great sadness that he realized he had overestimated his capabilities. Even after throwing the knives for an entire day to the point where both of his arms ached, no progress was made at all...

By day, he was training in peace, and by night, he was...

Equipment Grade: Low Earth

Elemental Affinity: Metal

Attack: 602

Soul Compatibility: 6%

Upgrade Requirement: 93 Soulpoints

In the crafting caves, Bai Yunfei held up the metallic throwing knife he had just gotten from the cauldron with a satisfied smile. “It broke through the 600 attack boundary... a mid-earth tier soul armament should have 800 attack. That means I’ve less than a third of the way left to go. I wonder how much longer it’ll take before I can craft a mid-earth tier soul armament. Is it really when I become a mid-stage Soul Ancestor like master said?

“But... should I use the Upgrade Technique to try and improve its attack?” Bai Yunfei thought.

He shook his head immediately after asking himself that question. “Forget it. I nearly lost my life trying to do my best to improve before. I can’t risk my life like that again. I have to keep a low profile now and make sure I can improve one step at a time!”

Right as he was thinking, the voice of Song Lin called out to him from outside the cave. “Yunfei, are you finished with your crafting?”

Startled, Bai Yunfei replied, “Brother Song, please come in.”

Song Lin walked into the caves at a swift pace. Before Bai Yunfei could even ask what was going on, Song Lin spoke with a grim expression, “Yunfei. Come with me to the Northern Point, something has happened!”

Chapter 246: Life Jade Slip

Song Lin walked into the caves at a swift pace. Before Bai Yunfei could even ask what was going on, Song Lin spoke with a grim expression, “Yunfei. Come with me to the Northern Point, something has happened!”

This was the very first time Bai Yunfei had seen such a grim look on Song Lin’s face. Pausing for a moment in his surprise, Bai Yunfei then asked, “Brother Song, what happened?”

“We can talk later. Just come with me for now. The master and the other elders are waiting for you right now.” Song Lin spoke before whirling around to speed walk out of the cave.

Unwilling to be the slower one, Bai Yunfei quickly packed away his cauldron before chasing after Song Lin.

In no time at all, the two made their way to the main point before heading to the Northern Point. Arriving at a never before seen courtyard, Bai Yunfei and Song Lin walked into the building and headed to the middlemost room. Kou Changkong, first elder, second elder, and even Zi Jin had gathered in the room already with sour faces as they spoke to one another.

“Master, I’ve arrived.” Song Lin bowed as soon as he came into proximity with them before moving to the side.

“Yunfei pays his respects to master, senior, and the elders.” Bai Yunfei bowed as well before then asking, “Master, what in the world has happened?”

Zi Jin nodded his head to accept the greeting. “Yunfei, your third senior has come across trouble.”

“Third senior?” At first, Bai Yunfei was confused whom they were talking about, but then the answer came to him. “Ah, senior Jiang Fan!? What happened to him?”

Ever since Bai Yunfei had first learned who had saved him in the

past, he had spent days trying to figure out how to explain the temporal ‘discrepancy’ about when he had joined the Crafting School. Almost half a year had gone by since he had joined the Crafting School, but not once had he seen Jiang Fan. It came as a complete surprise to hear that something happened to Jiang Fan today out of the blue.

“We’re not sure of the details yet, but Jiang Fan is in some sort of predicament. One that might potentially be fatal.”

“Ah?” Bai Yunfei didn’t know what to think at that; Jiang Fan was in danger?

As if to answer Bai Yunfei’s confusion, Zi Jin took out a jade slip that was about the length of his arm. It was crystalline in structure, but there was a faint flame that twinkled within its body. The flame was faint red in color and had a rhythmic pulsation to it like it was a heart.

While the bottom of the slip was flashing red in light, the top part of the slip was almost without light.

“This soul armament is called a ‘life jade slip.’ By crafting with very particular materials, it can reflect the health of a person, as the name implies. The degree in which the light flickers represents the vitality of the master of the soul armament; eighty percent is the general norm, and anything lower than sixty percent means the owner is either seriously hurt or is in imminent danger. If the jade slip shatters, then that means the owner has died.” Zi Jin explained at once. “This jade slip is linked to Jiang Fan...”

Right now, this jade slip was at fifty percent, meaning the situation Jiang Fan was in didn’t need to be said.

This was the very first time Bai Yunfei had heard of such a ‘magical’ soul armament, so he reached his hand out to hold the jade slip.

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: None

Special Effect 1: Capable of reflecting the current status of the owner.

Special Effect 2: Capable of pointing where the owner is.

Lifeforce: 49%

Unable to be upgraded

With the jade slip in hand, a string of notifications started to flow into his mind at a moment's notice.

“Unique equipment... that’s exactly like the upgrade stone!”

Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up with surprise as he thought to himself in shock. Schooling his emotions, Bai Yunfei looked back to Zi Jin and asked, “Are we to lend assistance if senior Jiang Fan is in trouble?”

Zi Jin nodded. “If it was some sort of mistake from his training or a momentary crisis, he’d be fine by the next day, but the slip has shown that he has been growing weaker since last night without any sign of improvement. We fear that he might be in a very dangerous predicament, so we wish to see if we can work something out or provide help.”

“If master called me here today, that must mean...”

Zi Jin nodded again, “Correct. Yunfei, you are of the Crafting School and a student of mine. Though there’s plenty of things you’ve not yet been able to attend and plenty more you need to know, Jiang Fan is your senior. This time... I wish for you to go lend a hand to help him.”

Bai Yunfei had guessed the outcome already, but it was still a

surprising realization. Half a year had already passed since he had joined, and even though Bai Yunfei's strength had increased by leaps and bounds, he was still a weakling if put into the circle of soul cultivators. Jiang Fan was a Soul Exalt himself, and if he were in such danger, what help could Bai Yunfei possibly lend to him?

Seeing his hesitation, Zi Jin smiled in reassurance. "Haha, you won't be going by yourself, of course. I've already decided to have the first elder lead you and Song Lin. Consider this as a way to gain experience. As long as you follow the first elder's wishes, your safety will be guaranteed while you'll learn as much as you can."

If the first elder was going, there'd be no problems at all. The first elder was a late-stage Soul King. It was likely that Bai Yunfei wouldn't have to do anything except learn as much about the world under the safety of the elder's hand.

Furthermore, the first elder lending assistance meant that Jiang Fan's plight would surely be resolved. Soul Kings were existences that spent their days in training rather than acting on secular issues—even if they were people who held rank as a leading figure of a group or family.

"Then... when do we leave?" Bai Yunfei asked.

"Right now!" Xiao Binzi replied.

Bai Yunfei said nothing to that.

.....

The group walked out to the middle of the courtyard with Xiao Binzi leading them all. "Your flying soul armament is far too slow, Song Lin. I'll be carrying the both of you instead!" Xiao Binzi informed Song Lin.

Bai Yunfei was taken aback at this; they were going to fly!?

In one shake of his hand, a greenish-colored light came into sight, followed by a longsword that floated off by his side. As soon as it appeared, the sword started to shake before growing double

its width to become a giant sword.

In a flash, Xiao Binzi stood on top of the sword. “Up!” He commanded the two others.

Song Lin looked at Bai Yunfei with a smile, “Yunfei, you go up first.”

When Bai Yunfei saw the green-colored sword underneath Xiao Binzi’s feet, his eyes started to light up as if thinking about something. Nodding his head to Song Lin, Bai Yunfei hopped up to grab onto the sword’s handle with his right hand. Following a twist of his hand, he flipped himself up onto the sword right behind Xiao Binzi.

It wasn’t a high jump. Bai Yunfei just wanted to borrow this chance to touch the sword to learn of its attributes.

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven
Elemental Affinity: Wind
Attack: 2639

Equipment Effect: By transmitting soulforce, flight is capable with this item.
Upgrade Requirement: 160 Soulpoints

“A low-heaven tier that’s capable of flight...” Bai Yunfei jealously thought. Ever since he had joined the Crafting School, his understanding of the world of cultivators had expanded greatly along with his standards. In the past, a high-human tier soul armament would’ve left him giddy with joy, but now, even a heaven tier soul armament felt like it was becoming more and more common in appearance....

At the same time, he felt relieved. If the first elder of the Crafting School was using an earth tier soul armament, it’d certainly be a very troubling situation.

Bai Yunfei's actions to get on top of the sword were very unnatural, but not a single person paid much attention to him. Song Lin himself leaped off of the ground and landed right behind Bai Yunfei.

From the side, Kou Changkong gave his warning, "Song Lin, look after Yunfei and don't be too impulsive."

Song Lin nodded his head. "Yes, master!"

Kou Changkong turned his head to Bai Yunfei next, "Yunfei, follow the first elder and Song Lin. Don't take any risks!"

"Yes, senior. I'll be careful."

With a wave of his right hand, Xiao Binzi floated Jiang Fan's jade slip into his palm and let it point where it wanted. East, that was the direction where Jiang Fan would be.

"The east..." Xiao Binzi pocketed the jade slip, "Make sure to coat yourself in your soulforce. We're heading out!!"

"Whoosh!!"

No sooner did he finish speaking than the green sword beneath him explode in a flurry of green light. A bright-green trail immediately formed right behind the sword as it took the three people through the sky...

Chapter 247: Curopia City in the Black Mountain Province

The wind screamed as it streamed past Bai Yunfei's ears and slammed into his face, a rather painful sensation, as he flew through the air. Despite Xiao Binzi's warning to protect himself with his soulforce, Bai Yunfei wasn't fast enough to respond when they first started flying, and he felt the full effects of the wind resistance.

A reddish glow emanated in the air around them, protecting both Song Lin and Bai Yunfei. Xiao Binzi was using his soulforce to protect them both.

Bai Yunfei could feel his body grow lighter, but the sensation wasn't all too pleasant at first. The force protecting him from the air felt reminiscent of elemental fire, much to Bai Yunfei's shock. This wasn't something that any equipment effect could reproduce. Xiao Binzi himself was using his soulforce to manipulate the elemental fire to do as he pleased for this protective shroud. At the level of training Bai Yunfei had right now, an act like this was practically impossible.

When he lifted his head up, all Bai Yunfei could see was the sky for hundreds of meters around. Beneath his feet, a myriad of things appeared and disappeared in a semi-continuous blur. He could just barely see some buildings flashing in and out of sight.

"Eh? Isn't this..." Looking back behind him, Bai Yunfei stared off at the small speck that continued to disappear behind him. Unsure of himself, Bai Yunfei asked Song Lin, "Brother Song Lin, isn't that..."

Song Lin nodded. "Yes, what we just passed was Redfire City."

It really was Redfire City!!

Doing a double take, Bai Yunfei stared off in the direction behind

them in pure amazement. How long had it been since they set off? Ten minutes? Not even that long.

Was that really Redfire City!? When they first traveled to Redfire City, nearly half the day went by before they arrived!!

Grinning, Song Lin replied, “The elder’s Zephyr Sword is the fastest soul armament capable of flight in our school. If not for the fact that the elder’s making sure to protect us, we’d be able to fly even faster.”

“Even faster...” Bai Yunfei mouthed as he looked down at the giant sword beneath him in envy. “How long will it take to return to Talus City with this sword? Dozens of days? Or barely even a dozen?”

“Brother Song, how strong does one have to be to make a soul armament capable of flight?” Bai Yunfei asked out of curiosity.

“Those? Well, a late-stage Soul Ancestor would be able to make a good one. They’re very complex to make. I could probably make a very rudimentary version myself. It wouldn’t be too fast, but my speed would definitely increase by two or three times over.”

“A late-stage Soul Ancestor...” He was crestfallen by that response. Who knows when he’d become a late-stage Soul Ancestor? That was a far ways away. It may as well be better for him to use the brick to fly in the meantime...

.....

It was reaching dusk when the three set off from Mt. Crimson, and without Bai Yunfei’s knowledge, the sky began to grow darker and darker with the passage of time. Even the scenery beneath him wasn’t visibility. With Bai Yunfei’s current strength, using his soulsense would only register everything in flashes before it disappeared.

Every so often, Xiao Binzi would take out Jiang Fan's jade slip to look at its status and to confirm the direction. He was silent

throughout the entire trip, so after a while, even Bai Yunfei and Song Lin cut their conversation short. They stood on top of the sword in silence as well.

Like a shooting star flying through the night sky, the sword streaked over the horizon.

The morning sun was just starting to peek out from beyond the horizon when Song Lin warned Bai Yunfei that they had arrived in the Great Plains Province and that they were on their way to the neighboring Black Mountain Province to the east.

The distance from Mt. Crimson to the Black Mountain Province was roughly the same distance from Mt. Crimson to the Northern Cliff Province. It took Bai Yunfei a little over a month for him to reach Mt. Crimson from the edge of the province, but it took only a single night for Xiao Binzi's soul armament to cover the same distance!

Going without food or water for an entire day wasn't a problem for the three of them.

When it was afternoon, Xiao Binzi started to slow down, though his eyes continued to focus on the jade slip in his hand and the direction it pointed.

The edge of a city was just starting to form over the horizon. "First elder, that must be Curopia City."

"Curopia City?" Xiao Binzi looked back down at the jade slip and then back at the city up ahead. "The Xiao and the Sun have lived in Curopia City for generations and hate each other. If Jiang Fan is in this direction... are the Xiao involved in this?"

"Perhaps the Xiao don't know what's going on. Why not pay a visit to their place and ask?" Song Lin suggested.

"Yes," Xiao Binzi nodded after a moment's thought. "We shall do so then."

Picking up in speed, the sword shot off toward the city.

As soon as they reached the sky near the city, Xiao Binzi's eyes narrowed just slightly as his soulforce started to prod into the city.

“That Tang girl is here as well!?”

“Eh? What? First elder, what Tang girl?” Bai Yunfei asked in surprise.

“Do you mean... Xinyun is here too!?”

Xiao Binzi nodded his head. “Yes, that same Tang girl.”

“Wasn't Xinyun gone with the third elder? Did they have the... the same destination?”

“It wasn't, but Cang Yu's destination isn't far from here. My guess is that she must've come across Jiang Fan's call for help somehow and rushed on over...” Xiao Binzi conjectured. Looking off to a giant manor far in the city, he said, “To know for sure, we must find that Tang girl!”

Turning, the sword shot off toward the manor Xiao Binzi was talking about...

.....

Curopia City was the Black Mountain Province's largest, most central city. The two households, the Xiao and the Sun lived in the same area. They were not friends, but enemies. Already dozens of years had passed since the conflict started, and only a stalemate for power acted as a balance.

In the northeastern part of the city was the manor for the Xiao. In the central courtyards was an elderly man dressed in rich purple robes. Though stone-faced in expression, he stared up at the sky.

This man was the head of the Xiao, Xiao Rang.

“Father, what's the matter?” A middle-aged man asked upon noticing his actions.

“We've a visitor!” Xiao Rang grimly replies, “a strong one at that. Judging from his aura, he's a late-stage Soul Exalt at the very least,

but he's most likely..."

He didn't even need to bother with saying Soul King for his son to be taken back.

"Is he an enemy? Did the Sun find some helpers from somewhere!?"

Xiao Rang shook his head, "I don't feel any hostility, but it's hard to say. Disaster can't always be avoided, so let's take our chances!"

Seconds after he finished speaking, a single green light came flying into sight and landed on the ground. As the light dispersed, a single elderly man and two young men walked out of it.

Casting a quick glance at the three, Xiao Rang's eyes widened at the sight of Song Lin. "Are you..." He spoke hesitantly as he gave an even closer look.

Song Lin nodded his head to Xiao Rang with a smile. "Senior Xiao, I hope you've been well since our last encounter. I'm Song Lin from the Crafting School. We've met before several times."

"Song Lin! The Crafting School!" Xiao Rang lit up with joy, "And here I thought I was mistaken. It really is you!"

"Haha, it's great that senior Xiao still remembers me... I was worried how I'd verify my identity otherwise." Song Lin smiled.

"I hadn't thought that nephew Song Lin would come visit my household. Please, please come in, we can talk inside." Xiao Rang was far stronger than Song Lin, but even he wouldn't dare mistreat Song Lin. He hurried to bring the three into the receiving halls.

As soon as everyone was seated and the servants had been called to pour the tea, Xiao Rang started with, "Nephew Song Lin, these two are..."

When he looked at Xiao Binzi, Xiao Rang's eyes were filled with respect. He knew that the one with the powerful aura was this elder. Even though he wasn't able to fully see Xiao Binzi's strength,

what he saw was still enough to astound him and fill him with awe.

As for Bai Yunfei, Xiao Rang could see that he was only an early-stage Soul Ancestor, so Xiao Rang dismissed him as a new person to the school and a junior schoolmate to Song Lin.

“Senior Xiao, this is the first elder of our crafting School, and this is the new disciple of the previous headmaster Zi Jin, Bai Yunfei.”

“The first elder!!” Even though he knew that the elderly one surely had a high position in the school, he hadn’t been expecting the first elder.

Then he did a double take after the second introduction, “What did you say? This young one is... a new disciple of Zi Jin? Wouldn’t that make him...”

Song Lin nodded. “Correct. In accordance to hierarchy, he is my senior uncle and junior to Jiang Fan.”

Chapter 248: House of Xiao

Xiao Rang was completely stunned after his discovery of how 'high' of a status Bai Yunfei had. He once had the privilege of meeting the ex-headmaster when he was a late-stage Soul Ancestor thanks to Jiang Fan. In his heart, the Zi Jin was an undeniably powerful entity, but this twenty-something year old youth in front of him was somehow a disciple to such a man!

“Jiang Fan was sixteen when he to become a Soul Ancestor, but this one only managed it when he became twenty. Calling him a genius wouldn't be out of the question, but he's on par with Song Lin at most. Him becoming a disciple to Zi Jin must mean there's some other amazing crafting-related factor to him...” Xiao Binzi thought.

Masking his shock as quickly as he could, Xiao Rang began to speak courteously to Bai Yunfei, “So you're a disciple to the previous headmaster Zi Jin, lord Bai. To have reached the Soul Ancestor at such a young speaks loudly of your outstanding talents.”

He then turned to Xiao Binzi and respectfully bowed, “I presume you're here for Jiang Fan, elder Xiao?”

One of Xiao Binzi's eyebrow rose up on his face, “So Jiang Fan was here!? Speak, what happened to him?”

Due to the slip in his emotions, Xiao Binzi's words had been heavily laden with the aura of a Soul King, pressuring Xiao Rang into a state of unease. He was still able to keep his calm enough to reply, “Jiang Fan was a guest in this household for a while before, elder Xiao.”

He paused here to take a deep breath. “Several months ago, a conflict happened between the Xiao and another house in Curopia City, the Sun. Without warning, they launched a large-scale attack on our house and demanded our subservience. For dozens of years,

our two houses have been in a stalemate, but their latest attempts revealed several unknown strong individuals in their employ.

“With our Xiao in danger, we had no other choice but to ask Jiang Fan. He promised to help, but ultimately it was his help that led to him being in such a state.

“It wasn’t long after that we realized even more and more people were coming to fight our house, and to our surprise, they were men from the Beast Taming School! Somehow, the Sun aligned themselves with the Beast Taming School!”

Upon hearing that the Beast Taming School was involved, Xiao Binzi’s eyes narrowed together. Bai Yunfei was surprised as well. He hadn’t expected to find the Beast Taming School involved here either. Despite Xiao Binzi’s silence and Bai Yunfei’s surprise, neither of the two interrupted Xiao Rang and instead sat there in doubt.

“The one leading the group from the Beast Taming School was a late-stage Soul Exalt. He and Jiang Fan fought for a very long time. Jiang Fan used his soul armament to bring the fight to a standstill. In the end, the two of them were worried that they’d bring collateral damage to Curopia City and agreed to pull back. While the deadlock continued, Jiang Fan decided to watch over the Xiao for the meantime.

“Several days ago, Jiang Fan said that he felt something was amiss and that he’d go investigating, but he never returned!!” Xiao Rang exclaimed, prompting his three listeners to feel surprised.

Knowing that he was nearing the climax of the story, Xiao Rang continued, “We dispatched our men everywhere to see if anything could be found, but nothing came up. Even the one new tidbit we learned has yet to be confirmed... that night, several figures from the Beast Taming School were said to have left the city and have yet to come back.

“Just yesterday, someone calling themselves the third elder from

the Crafting School arrived here, saying that they came into contact with a secret signal from Jiang Fan. They asked about several things about our Xiao before leaving the city. We haven't heard a thing from them as well..."

With the explanation finished, Bai Yunfei and the other two males were stuck in a silent sphere of thought. After thinking about all the details, Bai Yunfei then asked Xiao Rang, "Lord Xiao, if I may ask something; when the third elder came by, was there anyone else with her?"

"Oh, do you mean miss Tang, lord Bai?" Xiao Binzi nodded. "The third elder left her here when she left. I've had my men escort her around."

But Xiao Binzi continued to look on with concern, "Are you saying that since Cang Yu left a day ago and there has been no other information?"

Xiao Rang nodded. "Yes. In our fear of implicating the third elder, I've had none of our men go with her. All I know is that she left following some sort of trail out of the city. After that, there were no more communications between us two. Miss Tang asked this afternoon to go after the third elder, but I was afraid of the potential danger and persuaded her not to go."

Still grim, Xiao Binzi stared at the jade slip in his hand. The light was already slightly dimmer than before. "So Cang Yu herself has been gone an entire day. This means Jiang Fan is in an even worse of a case than we thought. Either she hasn't found Jiang Fan yet, or she has found him already, but..."

"This complicates matters even more then. We must be on our way at once."

As he spoke, the faint sounds of footsteps could be heard echoing through the halls along with the sight of a figure in white entering the room. When the figure saw Bai Yunfei seated at the outermost spot, a joyous greeting came out from the person, "Yunfei, it really

is you!”

Looking up, Bai Yunfei noticed that the newcomer was Tang Xinyun. She was dressed in a snowy-white robe as usual. From both sides of her head, a section of her hair was weaved around to the other side so that it formed a ring around her head. A silky-white cloth was the only thing that held her hair in place. There was a sliver of steel and maturity hidden in her gentle appearance; perhaps this development was borne from the experiences she had gathered during her one month journey.

“Senior.” Tang Xinyun greeted Song Lin after Bai Yunfei, but when she saw Xiao Binzi, her eyes reflected her surprise. Hurriedly moving to his front, she bowed, “Xinyun pays her respects to the first elder. It’s wonderful to see you! Master went out yesterday, but she hasn’t returned yet. If the first elder could...”

Before she could even finish, Xiao Binzi’s eyes were already widening as the jade slip in his hand changed once more.

It was now at 40%!!

Holding a hand up to stop whatever Tang Xinyun had to say, Xiao Binzi said, “Say no more. I was already planning on moving out. We can talk about the details later, but I must go right now!”

Leaping to his feet, Xiao Binzi stalked to the exit.

Xiao Rang, on the other hand, hesitated before asking, “Elder, is there perhaps anything the Xiao can do for you...”

“No need!” Xiao Binzi waved a hand rather than turning his head back.

.....

The group quickly made their way to the outside courtyard where Xiao Binzi was already setting down his Zephyr Sword. Eying Bai Yunfei, he said, “There’s a change in plans. Yunfei, you and that Tang girl will stay here. Song Lin, you come with me!”

He flew onto the Zephyr Sword with Song Lin chasing after him.

Tang Xinyun hurried to reply, “First elder, please let me come with, I’m worried about my master...”

“How troublesome! What could you do?” Xiao Binzi rebuked with narrowed eyes.

Bai Yunfei started to plead with her, “First elder, please take us with you. If there really is danger, the two of us will hide far away. We may just be able to provide some assistance...”

For a while, Xiao Binzi said nothing.

Then at last, he relented. “Very well!” He sighed, “You may come with us, but if there is a fight, you will hide yourselves. Without my permission, you will not move a finger!”

“Yes, we understand!” The two replied.

Enlarging the Zephyr Sword with a bit more of his soulforce, Xiao Binzi waited for Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun to climb up.

Eying the jade slip still, Xiao Binzi waved his left hand slightly so that the elemental fire could protect them all. Then, in a flash of green light, the sword flew into the sky.

Xiao Rang and his son, Xiao Xin, stood side by side as they watched the sword fly farther and farther away.

“Father,” Xiao Xin asked hesitantly, “What... what should we do now?”

“What can we even do? We can’t escape the fact that we’re responsible for this mess with the Sun. Inform the others to keep their guard up and keep watch on what the Sun is up to!” Xiao Rang commanded. “Things are getting even worse than we imagined...” He sighed, “We’ve managed to bring Jiang Fan and even the Crafting School into this affair unfortunately...”

.....

On the sword, Xiao Binzi carried Bai Yunfei and the other two

students through the air while Tang Xinyun recounted what details she knew about Cang Yu and the situation. From what they could tell, Cang Yu found Jiang Fan's signal for help and had come to Curopia City. After learning what little information the Xiao had, Cang Yu then left and disappeared without a trace.

Xiao Binzi was no longer as calm as before. As they traveled, Bai Yunfei and the others could see that Xiao Binzi was extremely grim and silent as he clenched the jade slip.

They continued for roughly an hour before Xiao Binzi's eyes narrowed ever-so-slightly. Tilting the sword down, they descended to a hillside in front of them.

Looking in the northeastern direction grimly, Xiao Binzi said, "Jiang Fan is over there. Song Lin, you come with me. Yunfei, you stay here with her!"

Bai Yunfei was just about to suggest that they go together when Xiao Binzi gave him an intimidating stare. Saying nothing else, he pulled Tang Xinyun off the sword and had her go with Bai Yunfei.

"Song Lin, we'll move at on..."

"Boom!!!!"

The sudden sound of an explosion cut straight into Xiao Binzi's speech, causing everyone to turn to the source. All they could see was a fiery light that soared into the sky overhead before a nearby mountain came crashing down in a pile of rubble!!

Judging from the distance, they were roughly a hundred meters away from where they were, so the sight of a mountain exploding like that was extremely scary.

"This aura..." Xiao Binzi gasped, "It's Cang Yu!!"

Chapter 249: Prepare to Die!

If a late-stage Soul King like Xiao Binzi were surprised by whatever happened, the situation was far more dire than what they all imagined. Thinking about what to do for a split moment, Xiao Binzi commanded Song Lin, “I’ll go first. You go to where Jiang Fan is. Do whatever the situation calls for, I’ll be there in a flash!!”

Just seconds after he finished his last sentence, Xiao Binzi shot off on his sword and became a speck in no time at all.

As soon as Xiao Binzi left, Song Lin looked away from the old man to Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun, “Yunfei, you and Tang Xinyun stay here for now. I’m going to help Jiang Fan!”

Without any time to lose, Song Lin shook his hand so that a green-colored sword appeared in front of him. Compared to Xiao Binzi’s Zephyr Sword, this one was far weaker in light and power. Hopping onto it, Song Lin soon blasted off to the northeast as soon as his soulforce was pushed into it.

“.....”

Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun shared glances of concern and worry for a moment before Bai Yunfei tried to comfort Tang Xinyun, “Xinyun, don’t worry. With the first elder helping, your master will be fine.”

“Yes...” Tang Xinyun nodded, but concern clouded her face as she looked to the north.

The crumbling mountain, where that giant fiery pillar had appeared, was completely enshrouded by the dust cloud from the rock slide, but even despite the low visibility and relative distance, Bai Yunfei could tell that there was an extremely powerful force in that area. Due to his lack of strength, Bai Yunfei wasn’t able to tell what was going on in full detail.

Bai Yunfei turned to the direction Song Lin went with furrowed eyebrows. The first elder had said that Jiang Fan wasn't too far away, and the elder Cang Yu was fighting not too far as well. Combined with how unusually fast the first elder reacted, it was most likely an indication of how much danger Jiang Fan was in. That must've been why Song Lin himself left so fast, but the fact that Bai Yunfei was left here simply didn't sit well with him.

Power. It was an issue that stemmed solely from power. If he had enough of it, he'd be able to fight with Song Lin and perhaps even with the first elder!!

A fierce explosion suddenly rocked the area around him with several earth-shattering explosions following it, knocking Bai Yunfei out from his thoughts. Another brilliant surge of elemental fire shot into the sky, but not on a level as scary as the first one. The distance was even closer than before, so Bai Yunfei was able to see even more. Even the faint remnants of elemental fire was receding enough for Bai Yunfei to sense the intricate soulforce there and into the auras within.

Among the numerous auras was Song Lin; he had joined the fray!

Grim-faced, Bai Yunfei focused heavily on the sight as he debated with himself whether he should 'follow directions' and stay obediently away from the battle.

Tang Xinyun had noticed the battle too. Taking notice of the strange look on Bai Yunfei's face, she asked, "Yunfei, what's wrong?"

"It's... it's nothing..." Bai Yunfei waved a hand nonchalantly, but his face was fixed in its expression.

"Xinyun," Finally, he came to a resolution, "I have to go closer or I won't be happy with myself. You stay here, I'll be back soon."

"What? You're going over there!?" Tang Xinyun exclaimed. At first, she was very willing to go help with the fight, but after seeing

how the fight was progressing, Tang Xinyun knew that there was nothing she could bring to the fight. When Bai Yunfei said that he wanted to go, she spoke up to stop him, “No! The first elder said to stay put unless he says so. Yunfei, you can’t help them; this is something only the first elder and senior Song Lin can manage!”

But Bai Yunfei shook his head. “Don’t worry, I won’t do anything excessive. I just want to go a little closer.”

“But...”

“I am a disciple of master Zi Jin. If my senior is facing trouble, I can’t sit still on the sidelines. No matter the case, I have to go. Xinyun, you stay here and don’t move a muscle.”

“You’re telling me that, but aren’t you doing exactly that?”

“I...” Bai Yunfei didn’t know how to respond.

“If you really want to go, then I’m going with you!” She insisted after a second’s thought.

“Absolutely not! You’re far too weak; it’ll only be dangerous for you.”

“In front of those people, the two of us will only meet the same fate. If you’re going, I’m going!”

“I...” Hesitation flooded Bai Yunfei for a brief moment.

He cast a glance in the direction of Jiang Fan and nodded his head after a while, “Fine then. We’ll both go. Make sure to hide your presence and watch from afar. We’ll have to act based on the situation.”

“Yes, I hear you.”

.....

In the northeast, Xiao Binzi was currently rushing to the battlegrounds.

“Uoahh!!” A loud roar resonated across the land as a mountain-

sized elephant came charging forward amid an orange glow. It brought its giant hooves into the air and back down as it charged, the hooves of the elephant soulbeast caused the earth to shake and fracture under its rampage.

Just several dozen meters away, a white figure could be seen weaving out and away from the spider webbing fissures on the ground.

Just as the figure's foot tapped down onto the ground, a fissure suddenly opened up beneath the figure, splitting the ground apart!

A red light flashed out of the figure's body before gathering beneath their feet. Materializing as a red platform, the red light let the figure in white use it as a foothold to push off and away from the ground.

Landing several meters away, the figure retreated several steps more before coming to a complete stop.

This person was Cang Yu, the third elder of the Crafting School.

She was clearly in a very sorry state from the battle. Her hair was disheveled and her robes were in a very dilapidated state. Her right hand toted a gleaming red sword, but the cloth on her left arm was ripped to pieces, showing off her snowy-white skin with several black terrifying marks that snaked their way up her arm.

Mere seconds after she came to a stop, a very faint crackling sound could be heard as a jet-black string of chains came flying toward her from the left to entrap her!

Hardening her eyes at the sight, Cang Yu waved her right hand so a palm-sized shield made of golden light materialized in front of her. In no time at all, the shield immediately grew to surround her entire body.

“Clang!!”

There was a metallic clang when the two forces collided, but the shield remained upright. Cang Yu, on the other hand, retreated a

hundred meters back with the shield.

Shaking from the impact, the shield started to grow dim in light while Cang Yu's face grew flush red from pain. The blood came pouring out of her mouth.

When Cang Yu looked up, a single figure could be seen standing on top of the giant soulbeast. The figure was dressed in a purple robe with his hands crossed against his chest as he glared at Cang Yu. His soulforce was being transmitted into the soulbeast beneath him, but from the amount, it was clear to see that he was a mid-stage Soul Exalt. To his left was another man in the air and cloaked in a black mantle that covered his face. Despite not being able to see his physical appearance, a bluish energy could be seen as he shook his right hand. Following the clanking sounds of the chains, the weapon flew back and around him with the flexibility of a snake.

The way he stood there was enough to give anyone that saw him a heart-trembling sensation of fear, and his undisguised aura gave no small amount of fear to Cang Yu as well; he was a Soul King!

Wiping away the blood from her mouth, Cang Yu spoke, "Beast Taming School... do you mean to make our Crafting School an enemy!"

"Hmph! You're saying that now after all of this?" The man standing on top of the elephant sneered, "We came here to kill that Jiang Fan person at first, but if you're here to throw away your life, we'll kill the two of you together. If we remove all traces, who'll be the wiser that it was the Beast Taming School? Elder Cang, try not to resist. In front of a Soul King, you've not a chance to fight."

"Pah! You're nothing more than a mouse with a lion!" Cang Yu snorted as she tried to heal herself with her soulforce. From the start until now, her eyes had never left the black-robed figure due to her bitterness. She knew that this person had been doubting

whether or not to kill her; otherwise, she would've died a long time ago.

This black-cloaked man did indeed have doubts. It was reasonable to say that as a Soul King—even as an early-stage Soul King—killing a late-stage Soul Exalt would be as easy as turning his hand.

But the one in front of him was no ordinary late-stage Soul Exalt. She was an elder of the Crafting School.

Those who had any knowledge about the Crafting School, there was absolutely no reason for them to not fear the Crafting School. The black-cloaked man himself knew that while Cang Yu looked to be in dire straits, there was no way she didn't have a life-saving skill up her sleeves.

There was once a late-stage Soul Exalt from the Crafting School who fought against a Soul King. With the use of his soul armament and a method that nearly killed himself, he killed the Soul King! It was that battle that made the Soul Exalt famous across the continent.

That person soon became known as the current headmaster of the Crafting School, Kou Changkong!!

The black-cloaked man wasn't confident that he'd be able to retreat if Cang Yu were to use her last resort. Thus, he decided the best case of action was to wait. Like how a frog would boil itself to death in warm water, he'd wait until Cang Yu was at her weakest point before he'd go in for the kill.

As it was, she wasn't that far away from said weakest point. Cang Yu had already used several of her strongest techniques earlier, so most of her soulforce was already depleted. It'd take half an hour at most before Cang Yu's death would be for certain!!

Cang Yu herself was aware of this fact, but she had no other options. With a Soul King around, running away wasn't a

possibility, and neither was winning... with her stuck in this situation, despair was starting to creep into her heart.

Just as the man from the Beast Taming School was about to attack, someone caused the three of them to look away from each other in surprise!

While Cang Yu's eyes lit up with hope, the other two's eyes reflected their shock!

A wave of soulsense blasted out in a horizontal push, spreading a powerful aura to them as a greenish light came speeding over like a shooting star.

“You, who have raised a hand against the Crafting School, prepare to die!”

Chapter 250: Xiao Binzi's Strength!

“Senior Xiao!!”

Cang Yu cried out in jubilation. All of the tension in her body bled away, only to have a wave of fatigue, pain, and even a bit of a headache come flooding in.

She could relax a bit now. With Xiao Binzi here, she would not be in any danger.

While Cang Yu felt her nerves lessen, an explosion went off in both hearts of the men from the Beast Taming School. The late-stage Soul Exalt was far more pale in the face than his companion, and fear could clearly be seen in his eyes. The very sensation of the incoming soulforce was enough for the Soul Exalt to feel a bit like he was suffocating.

“A Soul King! A strong one at that!!” He himself wasn’t strong, so he couldn’t determine the true extent of Xiao Binzi’s strength. However, he could, at the very least, confirm that person was indeed a Soul King.

“It’s fortunate that there’s a Soul King next to me.”

The man rejoiced to himself.

When he turned around to look, what he saw immediately turned him icy-cold.

The black-cloaked person who had been standing there earlier was already making his escape!

He was running away!!

“What kind of joke is this!? A Soul King running before there’s even a fight!!” The man cried out to himself. What he was seeing in front of him was completely undermined what he had been taught.

In his mind, practically no one could even hold a candle to Soul Kings, but when another one came, the other man immediately

turned tail and ran without even fighting!

No matter how shocked or in disbelief the man was, the truth still remained. The black-cloaked man was running away with all his might and was solely occupied with escaping!

“Dammit! Damn it all! Xiao Binzi is here. How did he get here so fast!” Shivering as he fled, the black-robed man continued to scream to himself in mental anguish, “I must run! Only death awaits me back there!”

Dignified and exalted, Soul Kings were beings whose might could hardly be seen in full clarity.

At this moment, this Soul King was running away like a cowardly stray dog.

This was because he knew far more than what the other man knew of the Crafting School. As a more knowledgeable beast tamer, the cloaked man knew about the first elder of the Crafting School. Thus, he was more than aware of how terrifying Xiao Binzi was!

In the past, the black-cloaked man was once a trifling little Soul Exalt. During that time, Xiao Binzi was already a well-known Soul King. He was even more fortunate to bear witness to the battle where the late-stage Soul Exalt Kou Changkong was able to kill an early-stage Soul King.

Xiao Binzi was there as well, but there was another fact to the tale... as a mid-stage Soul King, Xiao Binzi was able to kill not only another mid-stage Soul King... but also a late-stage Soul King!

In that battle, both Kou Changkong and Xiao Binzi were able to destroy an entire sect!!

All he could possibly hope for for now was that the Soul Exalt beast tamer would be able to stall for time. Enough time that he could run away, even if it was just one minute more!

.....

Over dozens of kilometers away, the purple-robed Soul Exalt stared at his fleeing ‘companion.’ He wasn’t sure if he was dreaming or not, but sooner or later, he managed to recover his wits enough for a greenish light to flicker past his eyes.

It was minute, but he could sense that when the figure in that green light raised his right hand, a wave of red light started to flow out...

A shiver originating from within his body started to grab hold of him, and when it did, the man realized that he was suddenly unable to move!! Even his own arms didn’t feel like they belonged to him anymore, no longer heeding his own commands.

Not even blinking was possible!

The most important thing was... he couldn’t use his soulforce!!

As soon as Xiao Binzi imprisoned the Soul Exalt, he immediately flew off to chase the fleeing cloaked man. Said man was using his own soulforce to fuel his flight, but for Xiao Binzi who was not only the same level of strength as the man, Xiao Binzi also possesses a soul armament that’d easily outspeed his prey. Distance wouldn’t even be a factor in this chase.

When the cloaked man was already a hundred kilometers away, he turned his head back—only to be terror-stricken by what he saw.

Xiao Binzi, who was riding his green Zephyr Sword, was already several hundred meters away from him!!

“Damn it!” The man howled to himself in anger. Frantic in his fear, the soulforce in his body started to bubble strangely before doubling his speed!

No hesitation was felt when the man decided burn up his own soul essence to make his escape even faster!

“Hmph!” Xiao Binzi sneered, though his speed remained the same. Shaking his right hand, a dazzling ball of orange light the

size of a small chicken egg came shooting out. Traveling faster than both Xiao Binzi and the cloaked man, the pearl soon found itself about to pelt the man's back.

It didn't slam into his back. Instead, it flew around his side and burst forward several times faster than before to reach the barren hill a kilometer in front of them and then out of sight!

“.....”

The cloaked man stared blankly for a second before shock from what he saw immediately dilated his eyes!

After he tossed the orange pearl, Xiao Binzi stopped where he was in mid-air. Rather than chase the man down, he only watched the man with his right hand stretched out.

And then, he unclenched his fist!

“Boom!!”

An overwhelming wave of power surged as someone's soulforce could be felt exploding. When Xiao Binzi unclenched his fist, the land in front of them started to quake violently along with the barren hill where the pearl was. It was almost as if some sort of living being was about to awaken!

In the blink of an eye, the entire mountain had 'transformed' into a giant stone palm!

While the cloaked man was taken aback by this transformation, the 'mountain palm' moved to stop him!

Still glaring coldly, Xiao Binzi clenched down with his fist!

There was a giant explosion as the 'mountain palm' followed the movements of his own palm of flesh.

As if it was swatting a fly, the mountain palm flew to 'grab' the cloaked figure!

“No!!”

Came the furious cry of the man in question. In desperate abandon, his right arm was thrust out, and his gigantic chains coiled around him. A wave of blue energy condensed to form a wall of water all around him, chilling the air.

Several crackling sounds later, the wall of water froze to become a wall of ice that shined and looked as if it was as hard as iron.

It took a second to pull this move off, and the palm was just able to grab hold of him!

If anyone were to look from far away, all they'd be able to see is a giant palm rise out of the earth and form a giant fist.

After the stone palm had formed a fist, wave after wave of soulforce could be seen coming out of the fist along with several slamming sounds from inside. Apparently, the captive was trying his best to break free from the stone prison and escape.

Narrowing his eyes, Xiao Binzi didn't soften his grasp, "Shrink!" He barked.

"Bzzz!!"

As soon as he spoke, the 'mountain fist' that had come forth from the earth started to shine a bright orange light. Waves of elemental earth started to pervade the sky and congregate around the fist before shrinking rapidly in size. Within half-second intervals, the visible changes to the fist could clearly be seen!!

The more the fist started to shrink, the more erratic the man's aura became within the fist. The man was starting to yell even louder along with the banging from his attempts to escape.

Within ten minutes, the previously large fist was no more than ten feet long and tall!!

The entire fist was ablaze with an orange glow, uncertain it could be made out of stone and earth anymore. The saturation of the orange glow was reaching a terrifying level where it felt as if it was made completely out of elemental earth instead!

A glint of murderous intent sparked to life within Xiao Binzi's eye. "Explode!"

"Boom!!!!"

The following explosion rocked the earth as the orange 'fist' exploded into pieces and dust. Along with the remnants of the fist, a mist of blood could be seen mixed in before scattering throughout the world...

An orange-colored pearl came flying out of the dust back to Xiao Binzi's outstretched hand. In the orange pearl, a single space ring could be seen.

In an instant, a Soul King had been reduced to nothing but dust!

This... this was the might of the first elder of the Crafting School!!

Chapter 251: War!

In the world of soul cultivators, Soul Kings set the standard for being considered one of the best. It was therefore reasonable to say that Soul Kings wouldn't be so easy to kill.

Yet, this black-cloaked man had been an exception to that. If a reason were to be stated, it'd have to be because of Xiao Binzi, who was even stronger than the deceased Soul King. A secondary reason could be seen when Xiao Binzi first appeared. The cloaked man had immediately lost all of his courage to even fight.

A subsidiary reason for why he had lost his courage could be the fact that the man had seen what Xiao Binzi was capable of twenty years ago and likened him to the demon Mara.

He was unwilling to fight back in the beginning.

In the end, he was unable to even offer up a desperate gambit before dying...

Nonetheless, Xiao Binzi flew back to where the Soul Exalt was on his Zephyr Sword. Though paralyzed, the Soul Exalt could see the battle that had just taken place between the two Soul Kings.

Drenched in sweat and completely at a loss for words, the Soul Exalt seemed to be having trouble trying to digest and believe what had just happened.

Ever since he and that Soul King had met each other, he had never once been recognized as somebody worth looking at.

And yet... that Soul King had been killed so easily!

No matter how many times he replayed the scene in his head, he felt like he was dreaming rather than living in reality.

Dazed as he was, the Soul Exalt managed to come to a harsh awakening when Xiao Binzi returned. His nerves were stretched to their limits. Though he was somehow able to maintain a cool-

headed state of thinking. All thoughts of resistance were completely thrown out of his mind, and his eyes continued to flicker in thought as his brain raced to think about what to do.

“Do you believe that because you are of the Beast Taming School I’d spare your life?” Xiao Binzi’s completely devoid-of-emotions voice made an inquiry in front of the Soul Exalt.

Surprised by the question, the purple-robed man couldn’t help but feel some hope arise in him as the question was asked.

“Was that Soul King not from the Beast Taming School? Do you know why I didn’t bother to ask his identity, or why I didn’t kill the both of you?” Like daggers, Xiao Binzi’s glare betrayed his emotions despite his calm voice.

The Soul Exalt’s heart skipped a beat as that feeling of hope was replaced with an uncomfortable feeling that something bad was about to happen.

Xiao Binzi cast a glance at Cang Yu who was seated not too far away, trying to recuperate from her wounds. For a moment, his eyes hovered briefly over the shocking state her left arm was in before it swiveled back to the Soul Exalt in complete indignation. “There is only one reason alone... you’ve conspired to kill a crafter of my school. There is no need to know who you are, what background you have, or even if you belong to any of the ten great schools of this continent! You will die!!”

Moving along with his final words, Xiao Binzi waved his right hand, summoning an unbelievably scorching wave of elemental fire. Mere seconds passed before the Soul Exalt was engulfed within the elemental fire!

There wasn’t even time to scream. The flames died out just as quickly as they came, leaving behind only ashes of the man that scattered with the wind.

It was as Xiao Binzi said.

There was no need to ask for identity, background, or even reason.

They would all die regardless!

It was almost astonishing to see that the normally level-headed Xiao Binzi could potentially be this protective and tyrannical!

Taking the two space rings from the dead beast tamers, Xiao Binzi picked at one of the rings and stored away the elephant soulbeast in it.

He stored away his Zephyr Sword next before appearing next to the injured Cang Yu. Concerned, he looked over the black aura that lingered on her left arm, “Elemental darkness? I hadn’t thought that one of those two would be a dual cultivator of such a rare element...”

Reaching out to grab Cang Yu’s left shoulder, Xiao Binzi transmitted his own soulforce into her. There was a gasp from Cang Yu as the black marks on her shoulder started to sizzle before disappearing from sight.

Seconds later, Cang Yu’s left arm was completely back to normal. Even the color of her face was back to normal as she let out a sigh of relief. “Thank you, senior Xiao...”

Nodding in return, Xiao Binzi said, “As long as you’re fine....”

But then, Cang Yu thought about the reason she was here; “Senior Xiao, Jiang Fan is in trouble. You must save him!”

Xiao Binzi turned to look off in the direction Jiang Fan was, “Yes, I know. Song Lin went over there first to provide assistance. I’ll be on my wa—”

“Boom!!”

An explosion interrupted what Xiao Binzi was about to say and shook the earth just slightly. Xiao Binzi was startled!

“This aura... Yunfei’s in trouble!”

.....

A few moments ago—

Both Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun were trying their best to erase their auras as they moved closer to the combat zone, but even then, Bai Yunfei was worried that Tang Xinyun wouldn't be strong enough to completely erase her aura.

As a result, he took out his Walk-on Strawhat and gave it to her to wear.

At first, Tang Xinyun teased Bai Yunfei on why she'd have to wear such a silly thing, but when Bai Yunfei explained that a senior gifted him this special soul armament long ago and could conceal the aura of the wearer, Tang Xinyun realized Bai Yunfei wasn't joking. Still, she wore the strawhat with a very skeptical expression.

As awkward as it was to have such a beautiful young woman wear such a shabby-looking strawhat, there was still a bit of charm to the sight. With the strawhat on, Tang Xinyun looked similar to a gentle young villager from the countryside

From there, the two continued to make their way toward Song Lin. Since they weren't as fast as his flying sword, it took several minutes for them to reach their destination. Hiding on a nearby hill, the two began to observe the situation of the fight.

Just beneath a sky-reaching mountain, a series of explosions and waves of soulforce could be heard and seen amid the chaos. Several roars could be heard, and the very first soulbeast to be seen was a giant black-colored tiger. Then, a dark-yellow python that was as wide as a bucket. Finally, two birds appeared. One of them was violet in color, and the other one was azure. Based on their auras, all four soulbeasts were very strong ones.

Only the violet bird could be seen beating the air with its wings as it hovered high in the sky. The other three soulbeasts were

attacking wildly at two figures whose red auras were hard at work in protecting them. On top of the violet bird, a white-haired old man wearing gray-colored robes could be seen observing the battlefield with twinkling eyes. Though he was standing on top of the bird, he was controlling the tiger soulbeast, clearly identifying him as someone from the Beast Taming School.

To his right, a gray-robed middle-aged man could be seen as well. His eyes were also focused on the battle, but both of his hands were dancing slightly as he worked on controlling the giant python and the azure-colored bird.

In the center of the battlefield, two more soul cultivators could be seen attacking two figures with the three soulbeasts.

One of the two soul cultivators, who were trying their best to coordinate with one another to protect themselves, was Song Lin.

The other person was the one who once saved Bai Yunfei back in Stonegroove City, Jiang Fan!

The elder standing on top of the giant bird was an early-stage Soul Exalt; the tiger soulbeast he was controlling was an early-stage sixth-tier soulbeast. The middle-aged man was a mid-stage Soul Ancestor; the python soulbeast was a mid-stage fifth-tier soulbeast, and the azure bird was an early-stage fifth-tier soulbeast.

The two black-clothed soul cultivators down below were of the late-stage Soul Ancestor level and the mid-stage Soul Exalt level!!

Under the assault by such a cumulatively strong force, it was completely mind blowing to see that the early-stage Soul Exalt Jiang Fan and the late-stage Soul Ancestor Song Lin hadn't been defeated yet!

They hadn't lost yet, but they were finding it difficult to continue fighting. The two of them were at a clear disadvantage, and if nothing was done soon, they would lose without a doubt.

Song Lin's soul armament was a spear that glowed purple and red from both sides. Its aura was slightly stronger than the Fire-tipped Spear of Bai Yunfei, but it was capable enough to block the attacks of the late-stage Soul Ancestor and the python soulbeast.

Jiang Fan toted a blood-red longsword as he fought off the mid-stage Soul Exalt and the tiger soulbeast.

Song Lin was in a comparatively better state than Jiang Fan since he was a newer combatant and had not been injured yet.

Jiang Fan was in a very unfavorable situation. The fact that he was fighting this group alone before Song Lin came spoke magnitudes of the danger. Concentrating as hard as he could as he fought, his entire forehead was dripping with sweat. His right arm was nearly a mangled mess of blood and wounds with wisps of black aura lingering about it. There was also three deep-looking scars from where the tiger had presumably clawed him.

The wounds from where he was clawed had already stopped bleeding, but the sight of them was still dreadful.

Despite his wounds, Jiang Fan remained steadfast without any signs of weakening. His left hand swung the Red Lotus Bloodsword in a flurry of red sword strokes, and several lotuses the color of blood materialized all around his body and moved about to block the strikes of his enemies. Each time the lotuses made contact, they would violently explode. His enemies were clearly intimidated by the lotuses—even the mid-stage Soul Exalt.

Though, it was also clear to see that the mid-stage Soul Exalt wasn't going all out. It was distinct to see that he was afraid that Jiang Fan would go for a final gambit that'd kill him, so the Soul Exalt was waiting for a sure-fire opportunity to kill him.

At some point in their battle, the mid-stage Soul Exalt felt a change happen in the area around them. Turning his head to look off to where Cang Yu was, his eyes widened in surprise as if he realized something.

“Change of plans. No more stalling. Kill them both now!!”

With a wave of his right hand, a golden machete appeared in it. The man pushed off against the ground with a burst of golden light. He completely disregarded the fire lotuses to attack Jiang Fan straight on!

His three companions were surprised by his actions, but they followed suit almost unflinchingly. In a surge of soulforce, the four of them began an even more ferocious assault.

The pressure on both Jiang Fan and Song Lin was increased multiple times over as death drew closer to them.

From the outskirts of the battle, the mid-stage Soul Ancestor continued to conduct his two soulbeasts in battle with a grim expression. There was a spark of excitement in his eyes. A victory would not have been easy for someone of his caliber even if he was fighting either Song Lin or Jiang Fan himself, but because the two of them were being distracted by the Soul Ancestor's companions, he was able to use his two soulbeasts to strike at the blind spots in their defenses since the two of them were distracted by the Soul Ancestor's companions.

A giant loach-like soulbeast came flying out of the ground for an ambush while the azure bird struck out with several gusts of wind. Each time the two soulbeasts attacked, Jiang Fan and Song Lin were both brought closer to death.

The fact that he was able to fight and possibly kill two crafters who were even stronger than he was filled the mid-stage Soul Ancestor with a decent amount of glee.

When the mid-stage Soul Exalt gave the kill order, the Soul Ancestor began to fight with even more glee. Waving his right hand, the giant python was commanded to swing its tail out like a giant whip to slam into Song Lin.

Though it was a surprise to Song Lin to see the snake strike at

him like so, he dodged the whip-like tail, allowing for it to slam into the ground with a reverberating tremor.

Licking his lips, the Soul Ancestor motioned for the python to burrow back into the ground and wait for another opportunity.

Simultaneously, the beast tamer standing on top of the violet bird cried out in warning, “Behind you!”

“Eh?” The Soul Ancestor replied.

As he turned his head, his pupils dilated in surprise as he registered a wind-like blade of green flying toward him along with four separate throwing knives!

Even as he moved to dodge the strikes, the python’s tail came back out from the earth to block each of the attacks.

“Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!”

Four separate stabbing sounds could be heard as the throwing knives shot into the tail. There was a string of sparks from where the throwing knives made contact before they were rebuffed. The Crescent Moon Blade, on the other hand, flew around the tail as if it were being manually controlled and increased in speed to strike down the Soul Ancestor!

“Tzzk!”

The sound of metal ripping into flesh and blood being spilled could be heard then. Though the middle-aged man managed to dodge a fatal blow, his right shoulder had a clear cut mark from where the blade struck.

If he had been a second too slow to react, his throat would’ve been where the blade would’ve struck and not his shoulder!

Panicked, the man looked up in time to see the hand of someone reach up to grab the Crescent Moon Blade. A red aura could be seen flickering off this figure who was already speeding toward the man to strike again!

Bai Yunfei had entered the fray!!

Chapter 252: Can You Kill?

When Bai Yunfei saw the battle from afar, he was both shocked and anxious. Song Lin had always looked after Bai Yunfei, and Jiang Fan himself had once saved Bai Yunfei's life. So to see the two being attacked by every side without Bai Yunfei even being able to lift a finger or join the fight, he was beside himself. At the same time, he felt a deep feeling of helplessness.

Clenching both of his fists, Bai Yunfei stared unflinchingly at the battlefield in front of him. He was struggling hard to not be seen by the four enemies while also making his way even closer to the battlefield.

On the other side, Jiang Fan had been forced to explode two lotuses in order to fend off the black tiger and the mid-stage Soul Exalt, yet he was still unable to completely evade a blade of wind that managed to bite into his shoulder.

It was that final bit that tipped Bai Yunfei over the edge. No longer able to rein his anger in, Bai Yunfei grit his teeth and whirled around to stare at Tang Xinyun who was watching the battle with him, "Xinyun, you stay here. I'm going to go help out!"

"What!?" Tang Xinyun cried out in disbelief, "Absolutely not! Haven't you seen how intense this battle is? The weakest one there is a stage higher than you; how will you even fight them!?"

Bai Yunfei was unswayed. "Don't worry!" He shook his head, "I've faith in myself. As long as it's just that mid-stage Soul Ancestor, I'm confident I can beat him! If I can alleviate the pressure on brother Song Lin and Jiang Fan and stall for time, I'm confident that the first elder will come over soon enough. The first elder will make sure we won't be in any danger!"

"But... what if you can't fight against that mid-stage Soul Ancestor?"

“No way, he’s completely focused on fighting brother Song Lin and Jiang Fan. If I can get the attention of that mid-stage Soul Ancestor, success is seventy percent assured, but whatever the case, one percent more is still one percent!”

“...” For a while, Tang Xinyun was silent. Her silence had prompted Bai Yunfei to move toward the battle, but before he could get far, Tang Xinyun bit her bottom lip in reluctance. “Yunfei, I... I want to help too!”

“What?” Startled by her determination, Bai Yunfei wasn’t quite sure he’d be able to dissuade her since he himself was determined to jump into the fray. There wasn’t much time to convince her otherwise as well. Looking at the distant battlefield with some hesitance, Bai Yunfei then asked in a low voice, “Xinyun, can you kill?”

“What? Likewise, Tang Xinyun wasn’t expecting this response.

But she nodded her head in determination anyways, “I can!”

Her response was far more adamant than Bai Yunfei expected. There was a clash between the sweet and gentle image he had of Tang Xinyun and the one in front of him right now.

During her one month of gaining experience, Tang Xinyun had changed a lot. Still, Bai Yunfei didn’t have much time to ponder about the changes. After several quick seconds, he relented, “Fine! Then listen carefully to me. In a few seconds from now, I’ll have that mid-stage Soul Ancestor move outside of the battlefield, and then you’ll...”

.....

Several rough moments later, Bai Yunfei was just finishing up going over the battle plan when he heard the mid-stage Soul Exalt fighting Jiang Fan suddenly yell out loud, “Change of plans. No more stalling! Kill them both now!!”

It was then that the battle reached a fervor. Both Jiang Fan and

Song Lin were already in a very sorry state. If they were careless, any single strike could very well be the one to claim their lives.

Nodding to Tang Xinyun, Bai Yunfei threw away all hesitation he felt and started to run toward the battle. By using the Wave Treading Steps to increase his speed, his figure nearly bled into a blur as he raced forward.

His hand shook once to bring out the Crescent Moon Blades mid-sprint. Grasping the blade by the handle, he split the blade into two with a clinking sound while maintaining his watch on the python and azure bird being controlled by the middle-aged man. With a swing of his right hand, the blade in that arm was tossed forward, and during the return swing of the very same arm, another four throwing knives were tossed out!

Due to the intensity of the battle and how concentrated he was on fighting Song Lin and Jiang Fan, the middle-aged man had never noticed Bai Yunfei's assault from behind. It was only when the early-stage Soul Exalt to the side had cried out in warning that the middle-aged man whirled around to see what was going on.

He managed to call back his python to block the four throwing knives while jumping to the side. When the Crescent Moon Blade whirled around the python's tail, the man had been unable to stop the blade from leaving a wound on his shoulder!

Without his speed decreasing in the slightest, Bai Yunfei continued to charge forward so that he was now within a hundred meters radius of the middle-aged man. Just as the man was pointing his finger to command the python to attack Bai Yunfei, the hand that was holding the other half of the Crescent Moon Blade gave a violent tug back as if pulling at something.

A cold wind blew against the back of the middle-aged man's head, causing his entire body to shiver before he tossed himself to the side!

“Whoosh!”

Following the rustling sound of something brushing past him, another wound immediately opened itself up on his side!

“The Crescent Moon Blades! Those are the weapons of the Crescent Moon Killers!” The man cried out loud as soon as he realized what weapon Bai Yunfei was holding.

Bai Yunfei quirked his eyebrows. If the Crescent Moon Blades could be recognized that quickly, did this mean that the Crescent Moon Killers were famous, maybe?

Storing away the Crescent Moon Blades once the other blade returned to him, Bai Yunfei swapped it out for the Fire-tipped Spear. Without a word, Bai Yunfei charged straight for the middle-aged man.

The five other fighters were astonished to see Bai Yunfei’s appearance, but when the three enemies of his took a second to properly look at Bai Yunfei, they all revealed a look of contempt.

An early-stage Soul Ancestor was joining the fight? What right had he to do so?

Clearly, this youngster was a cocky one from the Crafting School with an overinflated estimation of his own strength.

No longer caring about Bai Yunfei, the Soul Exalt standing on top of the violet bird spoke out loud, “Hurry up and kill them so we can leave!”

“Yes!” It took a moment for the middle-aged man to respond, but when he did, he glared at the incoming Bai Yunfei with a murderous gaze. This puny early-stage Soul Ancestor had actually dared to try and ambush him!!

“Go to hell!!” With a roar, the man pointed his right hand at Bai Yunfei.

There was a hiss, and then the python flew at Bai Yunfei with its bloody maw wide open in an attempt to bite its prey!

Jiang Fan had been skeptical about Bai Yunfei's appearance when he found him, but Song Lin was aghast to spot him there. However, he couldn't yell at Bai Yunfei to stop fighting either. He wanted to go over and help Bai Yunfei fight, but with the others surrounding him in a death trap, he'd have to be extremely careful or else risk getting hurt if he slipped up. With no other choice but to continue fighting, Song Lin could only hope that the first elder would come quickly.

Otherwise, if Bai Yunfei were to be extremely hurt—even if he escaped with his life—Song Lin would have no excuse to offer up to his seniors in apology.

“Dammit! Why is Yunfei so reckless? This isn't a battle someone like him can take part in...” Without a choice, Song Lin tried his best to focus on his own battles.

Without the python or the bird attacking him or Jiang Fan, the pressure on the both of them was now slightly weaker.

.....

On the other side of the battlefield, Bai Yunfei glared at the incoming python with a serious expression. Sticking to the ground with how his feet moved across it, he moved his right side behind him and planted the Fire-tipped Spear into the ground. Vaulting into the air with movements as fluid as flowing water itself, Bai Yunfei managed to evade the python's lunge!

Even before Bai Yunfei could move on to strike down the middle-aged man in front of him, the sound of something coming at him from behind could be heard. Turning his head, Bai Yunfei was astonished to see the tail of the python striking at him!

This time, Bai Yunfei wouldn't be able to dodge the attack like before. It had never crossed his mind that the python would be able to strike at him again so quickly, but there was no time for him to regret his decision now. Crossing both of his arms in front of him to brace for impact, Bai Yunfei's body was sent flying ten

meters back following the collision. Before Bai Yunfei could hit the ground, he slammed his spear into it to impede his backward momentum.

Sliding for another ten meters, Bai Yunfei finally came to a stop on the ground. Despite the Flameblade Bracer protecting him, Bai Yunfei felt his right arm go slightly numb from the impact, but with a faint red glow that spread from his bracer to around his right arm, the numbness quickly went away.

“A mid-stage fifth-tier soulbeast is indeed quite hard to deal with...”

Bai Yunfei sighed to himself, though he was not yet discouraged. Swinging his spear, he tried once more to dodge the python and to strike at the man controlling it.

If a surprise attack didn't work, all that's left was a full-on assault!

Chapter 253: A Predicament

Seeing that Bai Yunfei was coming at him with a spear once again, the middle-aged beast tamer snorted. Taking two steps back with soulforce circulating through him, the man commanded the python and bird to come protect him. Bai Yunfei was weaker than him in strength, but this man didn't have the habit of underestimating anyone from the Crafting School. Each crafter was not someone who could be underestimated. This was something he himself had always followed.

With a flap of its wings, the azure bird began to gather the elemental wind in the area around it. Soon, blades of wind started to lash out in a very simplistic attack pattern that tried to predict where Bai Yunfei would move by attacking him straight-on.

The dark-yellow python was glowing bright with orange light. Its tail was deep into the ground where it unleashed a wave of earth. It rolled toward Bai Yunfei thanks to the elemental earth it was using. At the same time, the python's body coiled around to the side to flank Bai Yunfei.

One by one, Bai Yunfei's spear knocked away the blades of wind coming at him. He then leaped two meters into the air to dodge the earth wave from the python, but before he could even land on the ground, the python's tail was coming back at him again!

This time, Bai Yunfei wouldn't let himself be thwacked by the tail. With narrowed eyes, Bai Yunfei swung his left arm forward, and the Compliant Rope wrapped itself around the python's head. Immediately shortening its length, Bai Yunfei managed to dodge the tail and fly straight for the python itself!

Just as the azure bird was about to drop down to interfere, a sudden screech and several blades of wind came attacking it from the side before a white figure flew out!

It was Xiao Bai, the quickshade bird!

When Xiao Bai appeared, a battle between the two birds began to take place.

Both birds were early-stage fifth-tier soulbeasts, but Xiao Bai was closer to the mid-stage level. Thus, it held a small advantage over the azure bird, but as a puppet soulbeast of the Beast Taming School, the azure bird felt neither pain nor feelings. It could become even more berserk in its attacks. At first clash, the ensuing battle was extremely fierce with both birds being of the wind affinity. Blades of wind flew everywhere along with two blurry streaks of azure and white through the air. Occasionally, different colored feathers could be seen drifting to the ground.

Now that the azure bird was preoccupied, Bai Yunfei was down yet another problem. With how quickly the Compliant Rope was shortening itself, Bai Yunfei was able to reach the python in no time at all. Right as he drew close, the python turned its head and opened its jaw wide to swallow him whole!

The arrival of Xiao Bai caught the beast tamer off guard, but he was still able to control the bird as it fought Xiao Bai and the python as it fought Bai Yunfei. With how well-known the Beast Taming School was for controlling soulbeasts, a feat like this wasn't all too hard for many beast tamers.

A pungent smell assaulted Bai Yunfei's nose as his left hand grasped the Compliant Rope and his right hand worked the Fire-tipped Spear. He contorted his body so that he'd be in a better angle to stab at the python, but there was no reason why the python would let its maw be stabbed so easily. Giving up on swallowing Bai Yunfei, the python swung its head so that it could fling Bai Yunfei away. With how Bai Yunfei was tied to the python with the Complaint Rope, Bai Yunfei was swung around its body in a circular motion before coming face to face with another tail strike!

"Tsk!" Bai Yunfei hadn't expected the python to be this nimble, so he had no other choice but to use his arms to protect himself.

“Bang!”

Once again, Bai Yunfei was sent flying another ten meters. Thanks to the Compliant Rope and its gradual extension, Bai Yunfei was able to counteract the momentum and continue revolving around the python.

By fifty meters, the Compliant Rope could extend no more. Loosening the rope around the python’s head, Bai Yunfei recalled the rope back to him. As soon as he landed back on the ground, he shot off toward the man once more!

Thanks to this recent exchange, Bai Yunfei was right between the python and the middle-aged man since the python threw him there!

The fact that Bai Yunfei wasn’t injured after taking two of the python’s tail strikes astounded the middle-aged man. He knew how strong the python was, so seeing Bai Yunfei completely unhurt was not within his expectations.

Though it was just a minor shock. As a mid-stage Soul Ancestor, he had experienced plenty of combat before and wouldn’t be completely surprised by something like this. As he watched Bai Yunfei run past the soulbeast and chase after him, the man let loose a sneer.

“If a person like you could play around with me, then we of the Beast Taming School would simply be too easy to fight!”

“I’ll take care of him now; we’ve no time to waste.”

A dark expression overcame the man’s face as he swung both arms up. Straight away, a strange marking appeared right in front of him before his body lit up in an orange glow. A wave of elemental earth rushed off his feet and into the ground below soon after.

“Hisss!!”

An ear-piercing hiss could soon be heard from the python as its

body lit up in an orange light as well. The ground around the python began to shake slightly. Then with a twitch of its body, the python dove into the ground as if it were diving into water!

Bai Yunfei began to run even faster when the man and python made their moves, but just before he could even get halfway to the man, Bai Yunfei could feel the earth within a hundred meters of him start to shake. Certain parts of the ground rippled with an orange glow as if the dirt was acting like water, and Bai Yunfei could feel the ground grow soft before part of his legs began to sink into it!

“Crap!” Bai Yunfei gasped as he felt himself sink into the earth. It felt as if he was stepping into a marsh. Forward progress was difficult, and he was sinking with each passing second!

A spark of inspiration flickered across Bai Yunfei’s eyes as an idea occurred to him. Swapping the Fire-tipped Spear from his right hand to his left with a twirl of the spear, Bai Yunfei clenched his right fist, with the Ardent Sun Glove, he punched the ground underneath him!

Ninefold Fist Force!

Right as the fist slammed into the ground, an extremely fierce fireball came flying out of the glove and into the soil.

“Boom!!”

There was an explosion of earth and stone as Bai Yunfei blasted away the ground. Borrowing the rebounding power from the blast to aid his jump, Bai Yunfei broke free from his earthly confines and launched into the air.

Only a Soul Exalt could borrow the power of the elements to remain in the air, so after his leap, Bai Yunfei began to look all over the place in order to find a good rock or another spot to use his Compliant Rope to fly over to.

Unfortunately for him, there were no such trees or rocks suitable

for his purposes within a hundred meters radius. For as far as the eye could see, the surrounding earth was swallowed up by the previous attack and was acting more like water than solid earth. If he were to fall into this now, he'd be stuck for good!

“If that’s the case, then I’ll just have to...” Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up as he prepared to use the Cataclysmic Seal, but then something out of the corner of his eye forced him to throw up his spear in a hurry to block his front.

From deep underground, the tail of the python came straight out of the earth and moved in an attempt to slam into Bai Yunfei!

“Pow!”

Practically seconds after Bai Yunfei maneuvered his spear in front of him, the tail slammed into it and tossed Bai Yunfei back down to the ground with a thud.

A crater formed where Bai Yunfei landed. By the time Bai Yunfei picked himself up, blood was trailing from his gasping mouth; there was no time to catch his breath. When he tried to leap up into the air, another problem had occurred!

Ten meters around him, a ‘wave’ of earth was coming right at him again in an attempt to surround him in a tsunami of elemental earth!

Everything had happened far too quickly for him to properly realize it. In fact, it was only moments after he picked himself up that he realized the attack was already about to hit him!

“Bang!”

Following a muffled explosion, the waves of earth conjoined together, entrapping Bai Yunfei in a burial mound of earth!

.....

A sneer crept onto the middle-aged man’s face as soon as he saw Bai Yunfei get imprisoned within the burial mound. To him, Bai

Yunfei was merely a greenhorn. The boy might be talented enough to become an early-stage Soul Ancestor at his age, but he was clearly lacking combat experience and was thus very easy to deal with.

Even a mid-stage Soul Ancestor would surely die if they fought against a mid-stage fifth-tier earth python and him together. Even a late-stage Soul Ancestor would find it very hard to even run away! When he fought against an early-stage Soul Ancestor, victory was assured in his mind.

A murderous gleam flickered across the man's eyes as he brought the orange sphere up into the air. Detaching itself away from the ground with a rumble, the sphere floated up before the earth python came flying out of the ground as well. Wrapping around the sphere, the python began to squeeze the sphere!

With a cold laugh, the man clenched his fist tighter.

The python gave a loud hiss before its body started to tighten around the sphere, and following a pulse of elemental earth, the ten-meter-radius sphere began to shrink in size!

A sight like this was reminiscent of the way Xiao Binzi had killed the Soul King with the mountain fist.

The smaller the sphere shrank, the stronger the elemental earth became. If this continued for even a minute longer, Bai Yunfei would surely be squished to death!

Chapter 254: Fight On And Press On!

The smaller the sphere shrank, the stronger the elemental earth became. If this continued for even a minute longer, Bai Yunfei would surely be squished to death!

Satisfaction slowly made its way into the middle-aged man's eyes as he watched the sphere shrink in size. In a few more breaths, Bai Yunfei would be nothing more than a pile of broken flesh.

Looking back up, the man realized that the azure bird had ended up at a disadvantage while he had been focused on taking care of Bai Yunfei.

“Hm... that youngster has a soul contract with an early-stage fifth-tier soulbeast... who would've thought? If I turn it into a puppet, my strength will increase again!” Since Bai Yunfei and the quickshade bird appeared at the same time, the man had mistaken Bai Yunfei as the one with the soul contract with the bird.

Excited, the man's eyes slid back to where Song Lin and Jiang Fan were fighting. With how injured the two of them were, the battle would most likely persist another ten minutes before it was over.

“As soon as that kid dies, that soulbeast of his will get weaker too. I'll take the opportunity and capture it... that Soul Exalt is pretty nervous. That must mean more people are bound to come. We can't stay here then!!”

“Eh?” Something caused the man to snap out of his thoughts. Looking up at the sphere, which had already compressed to roughly two meters in radius, the man had a suspicious look on his face.

The sphere that had been shrinking at a gradual rate up to this point had... somehow stopped shrinking!

“What's this? With how much elemental earth I put into there,

that kid should've been powerless..." The man questioned, but then, his eyes grew wide as a look of shock appeared on his face next.

"Boom!!!"

An explosion rocked the plains as the earthen sphere was shattered. A torrent of fire exploded forth from the interior, burning the python wrapped around it. Unable to withstand the heat of the flames, the python released itself from the sphere and slithered back down to the side.

Bai Yunfei came stepping out of the fire with his spear in hand and not a single injury to be seen!

Right by his side was a levitating object covered in an orange light. There was an orange-colored energy that surrounded his being as if protecting him; it was the lifebound armament of Bai Yunfei, the Cataclysmic Seal!

When he had been trapped in the sphere, Bai Yunfei whipped out the Cataclysmic Seal and activated its +12 effect to protect himself.

+12 Additional Effect: In exchange for soulforce, summon a shield made of the earth element. The more soulforce used, the stronger the shield. The total defense of the shield cannot exceed the attack of the weapon.
(ineffective against mind-based attacks).

It was a first for Bai Yunfei to be trapped in such a manner, so he found it prudent to study his surroundings when it started to shrink in on him. When the sphere was about to touch Bai Yunfei's barrier, he knew that it wouldn't be able to shrink anymore. Bai Yunfei had a good understanding of what the man was trying to attempt.

Therefore, Bai Yunfei decided to launch his counterattack without further ado.

Breaking out of the sphere was a result of the +10 effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, an explosion!

Since this was the very first time Bai Yunfei had used the spear after it had been upgraded in an actual battle, the resulting explosion had been completely unexpected to Bai Yunfei. The power was in fact several times greater than before!

Walking out of the flames, Bai Yunfei cast a glance over his enemy a hundred meters away. Before the man could react, Bai Yunfei flew into motion and charged like an arrow straight for him!

“Im—impossible!!”

It was only when Bai Yunfei was right in front of him that the man snapped back to reality. This time, he really was shocked and at a loss for words. This move of his was enough to kill a mid-stage Soul Ancestor without a problem; even a late-stage Soul Ancestor would find it difficult to escape, but somehow, this early-stage Soul Ancestor managed to do it with ease!!

By now, the man was doubtful that Bai Yunfei really was just an early-stage Soul Ancestor and not someone hiding his true strength. Letting his soulsense wash over Bai Yunfei, the man reconfirmed that Bai Yunfei really was just an early-stage Soul Ancestor. If he had to guess, Bai Yunfei’s strange spear was the reason he had been able to escape from the sphere.

In truth, the man was right.

After his shock subsided, the man began to take several panicked steps back. Waving his right hand, he had the still hissing python leap forward to stop Bai Yunfei.

Stabbing its tail into the ground, the python then dislodged the surrounding area and lifted a five-meter-wide piece of stone covered in an orange light into the air to squash Bai Yunfei with.

The Fire-tipped Spear had a twenty second cooldown, and it had

only been ten seconds since Bai Yunfei broke out of his confines. Registering the stone coming at him, Bai Yunfei swapped the Fire-tipped Spear into his left hand and brought his right arm in front of him. In a flash of red light, a three-meter-long blade of fire materialized out of thin air, the Flame Winged Blade!

It flew forward with reckless speed before slicing into the giant stone, cutting it in half!

“Whoosh!”

Like tofu, the boulder was split into two large chunks of stone before falling back to the ground with deafening thuds!

Bai Yunfei dismissed the blade with a wave of his right hand before glaring at the python as it brought its tail up to whip him again!

“Again!?” Bai Yunfei snorted. With a thought, the Cataclysmic Seal next to him shuddered once before a protective barrier erected itself around Bai Yunfei with him at its center.

“Pow!” There was a cracking sound when the tail slammed into the earthen barrier, but other than a ripple across the surface, the barrier was completely intact!!

“F*ck off!!” A brilliant gleam sparked into life in Bai Yunfei’s eye as he clenched his right fist. Priming his arm and Ardent Sun Glove with soulforce, Bai Yunfei let loose a burning punch into the python’s tail without any hesitation!

Ninefold Fist Force!!

“Bang!!”

The python had a tail that was as thick as Bai Yunfei’s thigh, but when Bai Yunfei’s fist slammed into it, the tail had been sent flying to the side!!

Though he had gotten rid of the tail, the jaw of the python came bounding forward to try and swallow Bai Yunfei whole once again!

Raising an eyebrow at this, Bai Yunfei decided not to use the barrier to protect himself. Instead, he flashed forward in a series of hazy after-images. He streaked past the python's jaw and reappeared right below its head!

This spot was the most dangerous spot to be in since the python could wrap itself around Bai Yunfei in seconds. Though Bai Yunfei hadn't the strength for a guaranteed kill, he had a plan ready.

Once again, the Fire-tipped Spear was back in his left hand and the Cataclysmic Seal was in his hand as well. In a flash of light, the brick returned to its normal mode before it was used to slam itself into the python's neck!

Threefold Slap!

"Bang."

The resulting sound wasn't too loud and didn't look particularly strong, but Bai Yunfei wasn't looking for a powerful attack.

Instead, he was looking for...

A sliver of soulforce bled into the brick, prompting Bai Yunfei's lips to curl into a grin. At first, the python's head rose, but the second after that, its entire body was thrown even farther away!

The +13 hurling effect of the brick had been activated!!

This was the might of an additional effect of an upgraded equipment. It didn't matter how big you were. As long as the effect was activated, you'd be sent flying!!

Now that the python had been sent flying away, Bai Yunfei disregarded it and returned the Fire-tipped Spear to his right hand as he continued on toward the still retreating beast tamer.

The man was already shocked from what he saw, but with the events right now, he was unable to even hold back his fear!

Breaking free from the sphere, splitting the boulder, blocking the tail, punching away the tail, his strange movements, and then

ultimately sending the python flying!!

Each and every single action was completely beyond what the man knew an 'early-stage Soul Ancestor' could even do, so only a single word came to mind to describe this sight.

Impossible!!!!

No matter how shocked he was, the reality in front of him was still there. Bai Yunfei's forward motion only prompted the man to run back even faster, but the distance between the two was already closing at a quickening pace!

Chapter 255: A Sword Through the Heart!

“Dammit, dammit, dammit!! What kind of early-stage Soul Ancestor has strength like that!? Who is he in the Crafting School! How does he have so many strong soul armaments!!”

The middle-aged man howled to himself in fear as he retreated. Both of his hands were motioning wildly as he tried to force the python to come to his rescue while trying to make the azure bird get away from Xiao Bai long enough to cast several blades of wind at him.

But that only resulted in the quickshade bird slashing the other bird’s left wing, greatly crippling its strength.

Several blades of wind did manage to make their way toward Bai Yunfei, allowing the middle-aged man to let out a sigh of relief. He thought that Bai Yunfei would hesitate, but what he saw next caused his pupils to dilate in surprise; Bai Yunfei just tossed three throwing knives ahead at him!

After he tossed the three knives, Bai Yunfei had the Cataclysmic Seal expand ahead of him to block the four blades of wind. He was successful in his attempt and had enough time to move the brick away just in time to see his enemy dodge the three knives. He was just about to let loose another barrage of throwing knives when his eyes suddenly lit up in inspiration. Changing his plans, Bai Yunfei tightly clenched his spear and sped up so that only ten meters remained between the two!

His left hand touched the agility bracelet on his wrist to activate the effect of temporarily increasing his speed!

Even though the man was trying his best to retreat, Bai Yunfei was able to catch up to him with the Fire-tipped Spear ready to stab into his throat!

The man’s eyes darkened when he realized that both Bai Yunfei

and the spear were right in front of him. A flash of orange light radiated from his body before he stomped down on the ground. There was a trembling sensation from his stomp, but after he took another step back, a wall as tall as him immediately rose up to block the spear's path!

Bai Yunfei's eyes narrowed at the sight, but he didn't slow down in the slightest. He brought the spear back by just a small amount before stabbing forward again to activate the Threefold Stab.

One explosion later, the spear effortlessly pierced through the wall. There wasn't any explosion, but Bai Yunfei didn't expect the effect to be activated again in this case. It wasn't a small chance to begin with, but that didn't mean it would always activate.

He did have a backup plan if the effect didn't activate though; if he twisted the spear, he could ignite the elemental fire around the spear to set off another explosion himself!

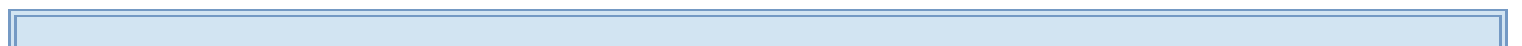
“Boom!!”

The resulting explosion blasted away the rest of the wall. This explosion wasn't as strong as an explosion from the Fire-tipped Spear's effect, but destroying a wall like this was still quite manageable.

Still, the wall did manage to bring Bai Yunfei's speed down a notch, enough for the middle-aged man's eyes to light up in glee as he widened the distance. The python was making its way toward Bai Yunfei from behind. If he could hold off for just another two breaths, he'd be able to escape danger and use the python to hopefully strike at Bai Yunfei when he dropped his guard!

From the small dust cloud that was kicked up when Bai Yunfei blew apart the wall, three figures came leaping out to charge straight at the shocked man!

The +12 Additional Effect of the Fire-tipped Spear: Doppelganger!!



+12 Additional Effect: Create two doppelgangers with strength equivalent to 50% of the caster's total strength at the time of casting for a duration of 3 seconds. Cooldown of 1 hour.

“Mirror images!?”

The man cried out as he realized what was going on. He could see that the three of them were without a doubt real, but the problem was which one was the real body.

“Whoosh!” Just then, the python’s tail came swooping in to slam into the back-most Bai Yunfei. There was a ‘bang’ from the impact before Bai Yunfei was flung away!

“Ah, the one at the back was the real one!” The man smiled in glee. As he prepared himself to attack with the python, a scorching heat suddenly rolled through the area as two of the red spears stabbed at him from right in front of him. These two spears were without a doubt not an illusion since they were so hot and sharp!

Startled, the man twisted his body to the right in an attempt to dodge. He managed to dodge the spear coming at him from the left while using his left hand to grab at the right spear, but when his hand swept out to grab it, only air met his hand!

Three seconds had passed, meaning the doppelgangers would now disappear!

“Tzk!!” In his distraction, the spear from the left stabbed straight through his left shoulder!

Bai Yunfei’s doppelgangers had caused his enemy to be distracted twice before an injury could finally take place. It was unfortunate that the explosion effect didn’t trigger. The man would be dead if it had.

“Aghhh!!”!

Pain coursed through the man as he let loose a furious roar.

Scratching at the spear embedded in his shoulder, the man tried his best to pull it out, but to no avail! A breaking point had been reached in the man, causing his entire body to explode in orange light as his soulforce washed through the area. His right arm swelled several times larger than before his light-infused arm moved to punch Bai Yunfei!

Beast tamers didn't enjoy fighting at close combat very often, but this man was still a mid-stage Soul Ancestor. In terms of pure strength, he was stronger than Bai Yunfei! If Bai Yunfei was hit with the man's attack, he'd be unable to accept it without harm.

Despite that, Bai Yunfei remained as calm as ever. The very notion of dodging didn't even occur to him.

Instead, Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up as he watched his enemy's right fist come at him. Taking a slight step back with his left foot, Bai Yunfei brought his left arm up before punching out with his own right hand!

“Pow!”

The two fists clashed together in a brilliant collision. The man's fist was filled with anger, but even that was fully returned by Bai Yunfei's Ninefold Fist Force. As such, both men staggered back half a step, but the Fire-tipped Spear in the man's shoulder prevented him from moving too far back.

Bai Yunfei's left arm ached from the exertion of trying to keep the spear in place. A mid-stage Soul Ancestor's strength couldn't be underestimated it seemed.

With how things were looking right now, the other man wasn't taking this collision with ease either.

Since his enemy wasn't making a move, Bai Yunfei decided to be the first to lead the counterattack!

Summoning the Cataclysmic Seal to his right hand, Bai Yunfei reverted it to its normal mode and slapped it straight into the

man's face.

Due to his shock about the current chain of events, the man wasn't able to see what type of powerful soul armament Bai Yunfei was using. Unable to make heads or tails of its mysterious nature, the man brought his arms up to protect his face from the blow!

"Pow." When a slight tap was felt, the middle-aged man felt surprise in his heart again. He didn't really feel anything when he was hit, not even pain!

That moment had only been that, a moment. As soon as the moment passed, the man suddenly felt his body start to fly into the air without a single warning! Without a doubt, the man felt perfectly fine before some sort of mysterious power spread throughout his body. He hadn't even the time to readjust himself before his legs separated from the ground and his body spiraled into the air as if by some sort of irresistible force!

While lifting off, the spear was dislodged from his shoulder, making the man cough out a mouthful of blood. When the spear was pulled from his shoulder, parts of his left hand wrapped around the spear were nearly taken off as well.

Preparing to use the Threefold Slap on the man again, Bai Yunfei was suddenly caught off guard by the python's tail when it connected with his waist. Grunting, Bai Yunfei was sent flying in the same direction as his enemy!

This time, Bai Yunfei had taken a direct hit from a mid-stage fifth-tier soulbeast. His soft-leather soul armament was strong in defense, but not strong enough to leave him completely uninjured. From the amount of blood that escaped his mouth and the cracks he heard, Bai Yunfei felt several of his ribs break.

Due to the brick, the middle-aged man had been sent flying into the sky. He was at a loss of the situation and simply didn't know what was going on beneath him. It didn't take long for him to recover thanks to his veteran experience as a fighter. Upon seeing

that the python had slapped Bai Yunfei away, he was slightly relieved knowing that the crisis was pretty much over.

As long as he could get the python to imprison Bai Yunfei again, he'd have a good chance at attaining victory!

But there was something amiss!

When his eyes saw the look on Bai Yunfei's face, he was surprised.

Even with the blood that was trailing from Bai Yunfei's mouth, Bai Yunfei could be seen smiling?

“Wh—”

“Tzk!!”

Unnerved by this, the man dropped back down on the ground. He hadn't even had the time to think properly when a sound barely audible to anyone else was heard.

To him, this sound may as well be as loud as a rumble of thunder in his mind!

Growing rigid in the face, the man slowly tilted his head down—only to see a bright-red sword stabbed straight through his chest.

Blood could be seen dripping from the point of the sword, and in the illumination of the red light, the blood seemed especially eccentric.

Right behind him, a figure in white could be seen grasping a sword. The funny thing was this person was wearing such a shabby-looking strawhat.

The unfunny aspect was how this person was holding the sword that had been stabbed through the mid-stage Soul Ancestor's heart.

This person was... Tang Xinyun!!

Chapter 256: Invasion of a Late-stage Soul Ancestor!

What the middle-aged man didn't realize was that Bai Yunfei was 'controlling' the way he had been retreating. Throughout the battle, the man was in fact being forced to go away from the battlefield to the spot where Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun had originally been hiding!

Bai Yunfei knew that killing the middle-aged man by himself wouldn't be very likely (Though it would have been good if he had. If the explosion effect had been triggered when the man was stabbed in the left shoulder, then death would've been for certain.). Beating and killing the man were two completely different things. It was true that Bai Yunfei had faith in his upgraded equipment, but this would be the very first time he fought a mid-stage Soul Ancestor. The very first thing to be done was to throw off the man's rhythm.

He had done so when he broke free from the man's killing technique, and thus, earned the upper hand after that. With the combination of his upgraded equipment and its effects, Bai Yunfei gave the man no time to calm down. Bai Yunfei forced him to move in the direction he wanted.

The final deliverance with the Threefold Slap caused the man to fly backward. Although Bai Yunfei was stopped and injured by the python, Bai Yunfei was able to masterfully engineer the perfect ambush opportunity.

Under the influence of being 'hurled,' the man hadn't the foggiest idea that Tang Xinyun would come from behind to attack him!

She was, of course, hidden, thanks to the Walk-on Strawhat.

And she hadn't failed to disappoint. She was hidden until the

man was close enough for her to strike him through the heart with her sword!!

By doing so, she lived up to the answer she gave Bai Yunfei earlier; she really could kill!

Vacantly, the beast tamer gazed down at the sword through his chest. The elemental fire from it was already devouring at his heart. Though he opened his mouth to speak, no words came out; even his eyes were dimming in light.

Ten seconds went by before the very last vestige of life drained from his body, and his corpse fell to the ground.

“Whoosh.”

A flicker of unease flashed across Tang Xinyun’s eyes as she pulled the sword away from her victim, but determination rekindled on her face shortly afterward.

This man conspired to kill one of her own, meaning he was an enemy.

Neither compassion nor reluctance would be given to enemies.

This was one of the things she had learned after a near-fatal experience during her one month journey.

.....

Once he landed on the ground, Bai Yunfei let out a sigh of relief when he saw the python was now motionless. He stored away his spear and began to circulate his soulforce to heal the wound on his waist. There was a faint pulse from his leather armor when his soulforce flowed into it before Bai Yunfei felt his wounds start to recover slightly faster than before.

Regenerative Soul Armor stats:

Equipment Grade: High Human
Elemental Affinity: Wood
Upgrade Level: +10

Defense: 431

Additional Defense: 225

Soul Compatibility: 10%

+10 Additional Effect: Increase recovery rate of wounds by 10%.

Upgrade Requirement: 83 Soulpoints

“I’ve actually killed a mid-stage Soul Ancestor. Is this how far I’ve come? I didn’t even have to use the Cataclysmic Seal’s strongest move...” Bai Yunfei thought to himself in sorrow.

Nodding in response to Tang Xinyun’s concerned look, Bai Yunfei turned to look off into the distance where Song Lin and Jiang Fan were still fighting, “The first elder should be on his way now; brother Song Lin and brother Jiang Fan should be...”

“Watch out!!”

While Bai Yunfei was thinking about the current situation, Song Lin’s warning cry had immediately snapped him out of his thoughts.

Startled, Bai Yunfei looked at the sky just in time to see a green light come shooting toward him from a kilometer away. Within the light was a figure in black. Practically seconds after Song Lin’s warning, Bai Yunfei could see that this light was already within a hundred meters within of him!

A late-stage Soul Ancestor!!

The instant Bai Yunfei saw the figure, the person in question brought his green sword up into the air. With a humming scream, the sword slashed down to release four separate green blades of wind. All four of the blades of wind screeched loudly as they traveled through the air, but only two of them flew for Bai Yunfei while the other two traveled to hit Tang Xinyun, who was just a few dozen meters away from Bai Yunfei!

“Xinyun!!” Bai Yunfei cried out. Throwing out his right hand, the

Cataclysmic Seal immediately flew forward in a streak of red light to protect Tang Xinyun from the attack.

“Bang!” The Cataclysmic Seal was able to block one of the blades, but not the other...

Since Bai Yunfei was so preoccupied with throwing the Cataclysmic Seal out to protect Tang Xinyun, he had no time to dodge the assault himself. Gritting his teeth, Bai Yunfei rooted himself where he stood and crossed his arms in front of him; he'd have to take the blow head on!

“Bang bang!”

Both blades impacted against Bai Yunfei's arms and tore the sleeves of his clothes to shreds. Even though the bracer helped Bai Yunfei survive the impact, he was still sent tumbling over a dozen meters due to the momentum of the elemental wind. His feet dug two deep trenches into the ground as he tried to prevent himself from falling.

From the bracer on his arm, Bai Yunfei could feel a wave of energy flow into it; one of the two blades had activated the +10 effect of the bracer: damage absorption!

+10 Additional Effect: When blocking, there is a 9% chance of absorbing and converting the attack power into personal attack to be released in the next attack.

(Can be held for 3 seconds. The amount of converted attack power cannot exceed the defensive strength of this item.)

He hadn't noticed that. Even as he fell to the ground due to the overpowering momentum from his enemy's attack, all Bai Yunfei could do was turn his head to his left where Tang Xinyun was.

What he saw caused him to let out a gasp.

Just a dozen meters away, a pale-faced Tang Xinyun could be seen with her teeth grit in pain. The arm that held her sword

drooped uselessly by her side with her left arm gripping at it. Blood could be seen dripping from her fingertips, staining parts of her robes red.

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Another whistling sound screamed through the air, prompting Bai Yunfei to whip his head back to look at the black-robed man. In his eyes was anger as he clenched the fist with the Ardent Sun Glove. A furious glow burst out of the glove before Bai Yunfei lashed out with a punch to attack the longsword coming down on him!

“Clank!!”

“Crack!”

Astounded by the cracking sound, the man looked down at his weapon with wide-open eyes. The wind attribute mid-earth tier sword had... had actually broke into two!

The Ardent Sun Glove, the Ninefold Fist Force, and the added attack from when the bracer absorbed one of the wind blades. The combined attack of the three was more than enough to completely destroy his enemy's soul armament!!

Bai Yunfei hadn't planned on that, but after destroying the man's soul armament, he took advantage of the man's shock to swing his left arm out to hit him with the flaming Cataclysmic Seal.

Grunting, the man threw away the broken sword in his hand and brought both arms in front to protect himself. There was a thump when the Cataclysmic Seal hit his arm, but rather than doing nothing, the brick managed to send both Bai Yunfei and the other man backward five steps.

“What strength!!” The man thought in shock. His right arm had a low-earth tier bracer on it so it was able to block the Cataclysmic Seal when he was hit, but even then, there was a stinging pain from where it hit. Even more accurately, his arm had lost some

feeling. When he circulated his soulforce there, his arm slowly began to regain its feeling.

There was something else he felt though. Just barely, he could hear his bracer cracking into pieces...

Reaching his right arm out, Bai Yunfei brought his Fire-tipped Spear out and prepared to step toward the man to strike him down!!

Chapter 257: A Draining Development

“Hmph!” The man grunted. With just a small step to the side, the man was able to dodge the Fire-tipped Spear so that it sailed harmlessly past him. Stepping forward in an instant, the man let loose a punch straight into Bai Yunfei’s chest!

“Bang!”

Staggering backward several steps, Bai Yunfei coughed out a mouthful of blood before trying to force back down the rest.

“He’s strong!” It only took a single move to showcase the vast difference between the two fighters. The black-robed man he was fighting now was completely different in strength compared to the mid-stage Soul Ancestor beast tamer he had been fighting before. This man was not only a soul cultivator that depended on himself to fight, he was also a late-stage Soul Ancestor, making him already far superior than the beast tamer.

Narrowing his eyes, Bai Yunfei sent the Cataclysmic Seal toward the black-robed man. At the same time, he swung his left hand and threw three throwing knives behind the Cataclysmic Seal. With those two projectiles thrown, Bai Yunfei leaped forward to use the Fire-tipped Spear to serve as the third strike!

Even against Bai Yunfei’s impressive assault, the black-robed man snorted derisively before his body started to flicker like a haze of heat.

Then, beneath the bewildered eyes of Bai Yunfei, the man split into three!

Mirror images!

This was the genuine mirror image soul skill!

The Cataclysmic Seal and the three throwing knives sailed through one of the mirror images without any resistance. On the other hand, the figure on the right was a miss as well with Bai

Yunfei's spear passing through it as well; this one was a mirror image too!

Bringing his left hand back to block the incoming punch from the remaining figure on the left, Bai Yunfei was alarmed to see that this figure was an illusion as well!

“What!?” A chill shot up Bai Yunfei's spine as the feeling of death poked at him from behind. Hurriedly doing a half-spin, Bai Yunfei brought his spear around and stab forward to protect himself!

“Pa.”

A hand with a black aura rising up from it caught the shaft of the spear. “Insignificant worm, know your place!” A voice boomed out at the same time.

Dumbstruck, Bai Yunfei tried his best to pull the Fire-tipped Spear away from the man's hand, but to no avail! No matter how much he tried to pull, the spear would not move!

Just when he was about to use the Cataclysmic Seal to hit the man, a sinking realization came to Bai Yunfei, causing his face to pale in color after realizing what was going on!

His soulforce was... was being drained!!

The soulforce in him was forcibly being drained from his right arm and into the Fire-tipped Spear!!

“What... what's going on?!” Not once had Bai Yunfei ever come across an issue like this. In the time he spent trying to comprehend what was happening, half of his soulforce was already taken away!

“It's him!!” With a vigilant glare at the black miasmic hand that had grabbed hold of his spear, Bai Yunfei came to a quick realization of what was happening. Letting go of the spear with a grunt, Bai Yunfei materialized a blade of fire from his Flameblade Bracer and slashed at the hand holding the spear!

“Eh?” Uttering a quizzical sound, the man was clearly not

expecting for Bai Yunfei to attack in such a way. The appearance of the Flame Winged Blade had been equally unexpected since he didn't feel any soulforce being used from Bai Yunfei's body.

Bai Yunfei's plan was successful. Letting go of the spear, the man took a step back to dodge the blade.

However, the Flame Winged Blade didn't even make a complete arc before it was dematerialized. It was a trick!

What Bai Yunfei wanted to do was to take advantage of when the man took a step back to dodge in order for him to retreat as well!

It took only one step before the man realized he had been duped. Snorting, he flew forward once again to chase after Bai Yunfei. Even though Bai Yunfei was trying his best to retreat, he was unable to shake off the man!

The chain of events that was happening in front of him sent Bai Yunfei into a panic. As expected, the strength of a late-stage Soul Ancestor was terrifying!! In his panic, Bai Yunfei threw a left hook, but it was useless. The man had merely grabbed hold of Bai Yunfei's wrist, rendering Bai Yunfei to be unable to move!!

"Fuck..." Another wave of unease washed over Bai Yunfei's mind as he processed what was going on. Once more, the soulforce in his body was being drained from where the man's fist was clutching at his wrist at an even faster rate!

"Dammit, let go!!" Bai Yunfei shouted as he pumped some soulforce into his Flameblade Bracer. Straight away, a Flame Winged Blade materialized once again in a flurry of elemental fire, surprising the man enough to loosen his grip on Bai Yunfei's wrist.

Staggering away, Bai Yunfei tried his best to try and circulate his soulforce to stabilize himself, but the only thing he felt was the world around him start to shake and spin before he fell to the ground!!

At a loss for what was going on, Bai Yunfei felt as if he was going

stupid. Not a single thought was coming to mind other than the fact that he felt extremely weak in front of this man!

A cold sneer appeared on the man's face as he flew toward Bai Yunfei with his right hand raised high. No longer was he dressed with the energy of the elemental wind, but now a strange black energy. Wisps of black energy, which chilled the air, wrapped around his fist in a sight that would make anyone look on in fear.

Still cloaked in his black mantle, the man's disdainful eyes could be seen looking down on the fear-stricken Bai Yunfei, "Die!!"

With that, he unleashed a palm stroke down on Bai Yunfei's chest where a certain acupoint called the Tianling point was! A palm strike with that much force behind it would surely kill Bai Yunfei if it were to connect!!

Bai Yunfei wanted to dodge, but at the same time, he wanted to use the Cataclysmic Seal to protect himself. However, both options weren't possible. He lacked enough soulforce to even command his body to move as he'd like. All he could do was stare at the palm that was coming closer and closer to him in complete and utter despair.

On the eve before the palm could connect, a figure in white shot forth from the side and knocked Bai Yunfei out of the way!!

"Bang!"

"Pfft!!"

Though the man's palm failed to hit Bai Yunfei, it managed to hit this person's right shoulder, causing the person to spit out a mouthful of blood. Some of that blood sprinkled over Bai Yunfei's chest, and some of it spilled over his face as well...

Then, the fragile frame of the person who protected Bai Yunfei collapsed into his arms as if her strings had been cut...

It was Tang Xinyun!!

For that moment, time seemed to have come to a stop. Whether it was the angry shouts of Song Lin or Jiang Fan, or even the surprised gasp of the black-robed man, neither of the two seemed to register to Bai Yunfei's ears. The scenery around him came to a screeching halt as Bai Yunfei felt several strands of Tang Xinyun's hair brush against her face before coming to a slow stop.

As if a bucket of icy-cold water was dumped over Bai Yunfei, his mind was wiped blank with the downpour.

All that Bai Yunfei could do was scream endlessly inside his mind...

“Why! Why did this happen... whyyyy!!!”

Just a moment ago, Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun were able to kill a mid-stage Soul Ancestor.

Then this late-stage Soul Ancestor came out of nowhere and attacked them! Though Bai Yunfei was somewhat excited to fight this man... how did... how did things come to this!?

.....

“Can you kill?”

“I can!”

“Fine then, in a bit, I'll head on over and try to get that mid-stage Soul Ancestor's attention. I'll bring him over here while we're fighting and create an opening. You'll come in then and kill him!”

“That person's a mid-stage Soul Ancestor, are you sure?”

“Don't worry! I've faith in myself. Since we'll be far away from the others, we'll only be fighting him meaning there won't be any other danger!”

“Okay, I trust you...”

.....

The dialog from when he was talking to Tang Xinyun about the

plan prior to the battle resurfaced in Bai Yunfei's mind. Looking at her pale-as-a-sheet face, Bai Yunfei was in utter panic.

The man that was responsible for this hadn't the same feelings. Although he was surprised to see Tang Xinyun throw herself in front of Bai Yunfei, he was quick to recover himself. With another sneer, the man raised a black wispy hand and struck at Bai Yunfei again!!

“Die!!”

Chapter 258: Craze and the Might of the Cataclysmic Seal!

The act of self-sacrifice to save the life of another. It was an event that had happened once before in Bai Yunfei's life.

If the stream of time were to flow backward, this very scene would repeat itself, but in place of the delicately kind-hearted Tang Xinyun, it was the equally benevolent and friendly uncle Wu that had saved Bai Yunfei...

The sneer that the black-robed man was almost inaudible, but it somehow roused the previously despondent Bai Yunfei from his despair. With a furious jerk of his head, Bai Yunfei's eyes were now a bright-red color as they flashed with a near-berserk desire to kill the man.

"I'll... I'll kill you! I'll kill you alllll!!!"

A flash of light lit up the Violet Soul Ring on his right hand as the two thousand soulpoints stockpiled in it deposited themselves into Bai Yunfei. As swiftly as they moved into Bai Yunfei, the soulforce quickly manifested itself outside of Bai Yunfei's body as an intense whirlpool of elemental fire.

Welcoming the miasmic palm with a barrier made of elemental earth, Bai Yunfei watched as the black-cloaked man's offense caused a ripple to flow across the barrier with a slight humming sound. Not only did the barrier protect Bai Yunfei, it had also served to rebound the palm strike and sent the man back ten steps!!

"Impossible! How does he still have this much soulforce!?"

This time, the black-robed man was truly shocked. No word nor idea could possibly explain how Bai Yunfei still had soulforce, let alone such a strong amount of it like just then.

After a successful defensive maneuver, the barrier made from the

elemental earth was sucked back into the Cataclysmic Seal. In its place, a flash of red light blazed forth from it. An abundant amount of elemental fire could be seen whirling around Bai Yunfei and the Cataclysmic Seal before even more elemental fire began to condense to be absorbed by the Cataclysmic Seal.

Unwilling to give his enemy any time to even think about the next step, Bai Yunfei pointed a finger at the man he was glaring at, “Cataclysmic Seal!!”

Almost as if responding to the indignation in his shout, the Cataclysmic Seal began to hum and vibrate before shooting toward the black-robed man as Bai Yunfei commanded!

“Hmph! You’re only delaying the inevitable!!”

Shocked as he was, the man was able to restrain his emotions and keep calm. This soul armament coming at him was unordinary, but at a glance, the man figured that there was no way Bai Yunfei would be able to use it to its true might. It’d be fine if he took the blow head-on, but dodging it would be an absolute cinch.

But.

Just as he prepared himself to dodge the soul armament, what happened next caused his eyes to widen before he made a hurried attempt to run away!

Only a moment had passed from when the Cataclysmic Seal left Bai Yunfei’s side, but in that time, it had grown from its original size to a hundred times as big in just ten meters.

And it was still growing too!!

The distance between the two was already a hundred meters or so with an elevation gain of ten meters. From this battle, the intensity of the elemental fire was already enough for the black-robed man to be in a state of panic. Never had he ever seen a soul armament like the one in front of him, and not ever did he think that Bai Yunfei would be in possession of such a terrifying ‘soul

skill' like this...

Even though the Cataclysmic Seal was expanding in size, it remained half a meter above the ground during its growth. The soul armament felt as if it was some sort of giant mountain, and the black-robed man was an insignificant human that the mountain was sliding down on.

The man wouldn't dare come into contact with the Cataclysmic Seal now. Moving left or right to dodge it was impossible as well. All he could really do was try and move back as far as he could while thinking of some sort of way to deal with this technique.

Only several moments had gone by, but already two hundred meters had been traversed in this fashion. The Cataclysmic Seal wasn't slowing down in the slightest either. In fact, it looked as if it was speeding up!

“Not enough!!”

Focusing heavily on the sight in front of him, Bai Yunfei's eyes were more and more bloodshot as he thrust his palm outward.

In a flash of red light, a fireball the size of a ping-pong ball immediately 'detached' itself from him.

Essence fireseed!!

He... he had somehow removed his essence fireseed from himself!!

“Go!!”

Swinging his arm with a furious roar, the essence fireseed was catapulted forward as if it were a shooting star! The speed in which it was traveling at was far faster than the Cataclysmic Seal, so in no time at all, the essence fireseed caught up with the soul armament and was absorbed straight into it!

“Bzzz!!”

The resulting sound from the brick sounded both lively and

furious in nature. The soul armament tripled in size while doubling in speed with a fire burning several times brighter than before. As a result, the Cataclysmic Seal quickly caught up to the black-robed man before striking at him ruthlessly!

Absolutely no leeway nor time was given to the man to dodge, and even though he had both of his arms in front of him for protection, they were useless. The Cataclysmic Seal was enormous and he was not. As things were, the man was no bigger than a rat when faced against a giant wall.

Not only did the Cataclysmic Seal smash into his arms, it smashed into his entire body!!

“Bang!”

There was a muffled sound from the collision, but the Cataclysmic Seal did not slow down in the slightest. Instead, the man was flung into the air. A spray of blood came from his mouth as he dropped back down to the ground as pale as a ghost!

Instead of going in for an encore, the Cataclysmic Seal rose up into the air above the man.

Beneath it, the man saw that the area around him had grown dark. Realizing what was above him with a horrified gasp, the man saw that the soul armament had already grown to a length of five hundred meters and a width of two hundred meters with him at its center!

For a moment, the man could think of nothing.

Then all semblance of color bled away from his face as he realized what would happen to him. Practically shrieking, he let out a cry after coming to a realization, “No!!”

His shriek was the catalyst for Bai Yunfei to swish his palm down with a murderous glare!

“Die!!!!”

This word had been spoken to Bai Yunfei twice now. Both times the black-robed man had not only said it with such disdain, but he had also failed to kill Bai Yunfei.

When Bai Yunfei spoke the word, it was like a declaration of execution for the man!

Following the downward path of Bai Yunfei's hand, the Cataclysmic Seal dropped to smash the man!!

No longer was the man as prideful as he had been before. Only fear and desperation gripped him as he moved his right hand in front of him, summoning an orange shield to protect himself. When he transmitted his soulforce into it, the shield began to glow an even brighter shade of orange as he lifted it up over his head.

Compared to the Cataclysmic Seal, the shield was no bigger than a fingernail to a hand, but it was his only means of defense...

In the blink of an eye, the Cataclysmic Seal smashed into the orange shield. If one were to listen closely, there was a faint striking sound from when the two soul armaments struck each other, but that was drowned out from the sudden tremor when the Cataclysmic Seal crashed into the earth itself—

—and then it disappeared!

The Cataclysmic Seal had buried itself into the ground!

The world seemed to freeze once more as the Cataclysmic Seal—an object that had previously blotted out the sky—was completely gone from sight! Even the red light that accompanied the Cataclysmic Seal was gone from the sky and instead shining beneath the ground.

The Cataclysmic Seal was not the only thing that had disappeared.

When the Cataclysmic Seal crashed into the ground, the aura of the black-robed man had disappeared as well!!

.....

A sparse few seconds passed before the earth trembled once more as the Cataclysmic Seal dislodged itself from the crater and rose into the air. Aside from the dirt and dust on it, nothing else about it had changed in appearance.

Though at the center of the base mixed in with the dirt, a slight red hue could be seen, albeit barely visible.

And just like that, a late-stage Soul Ancestor was... dead!!

Even though the man was dead, the craze in Bai Yunfei's eyes didn't subside. They instead traveled to the battle that had already paused a kilometer away. Both the beast tamer and the other black-robed man could be seen standing on top of the violet bird in shock as they stared at the Cataclysmic Seal.

Pointing his finger, Bai Yunfei immediately commanded the Cataclysmic Seal to fly toward the two!

"I'll... I'll kill you all!!"

Chapter 259: There's No Escape!

A few minutes ago, during the battle with Jiang Fan and Song Lin, the mid-stage Soul Ancestor had left the battle earlier to fight Bai Yunfei, leaving behind only three people to continue the attack. Of the three, the mid-stage Soul Exalt was clearly the strongest. With his golden curved blade in hand, he was a terrifying sight to behold. Whenever a fire lotus was successfully evaded, the man would press down on the Redlotus-Blood-Sword-wielding Jiang Fan while the other black-robed late-stage Soul Ancestor would coordinate his attacks with his green sword. Many of the wounds on Jiang Fan's body were due to this second person.

Since the giant python and azure bird were taken out of the equation, the pressure on Song Lin's side was considerably lighter than before. All he had to worry about was the black tiger while sometimes helping Jiang Fan fight for a while.

This way, the two were able to make their way through the battle without serious trouble.

Neither of the three paid attention to Bai Yunfei since they all believed that the early-stage Soul Ancestor would die as quickly as he came out. To come fight them was an act of walking on the path of self-destruction, so there was no need for them to try and kill him. There was no opportunity for either Song Lin or Jiang Fan to even help Bai Yunfei due to the intense battle, so when the beast tamer's aura suddenly vanished, both sides of the fight came to a grinding halt to observe what was going on over at Bai Yunfei's side.

Just a kilometer away, the five could see the man who went after Bai Yunfei get stabbed straight through the heart by Tang Xinyun.

Song Lin and Jiang Fan were elated to see this, but the other side was not. The elderly beast tamer on top of the violet bird was the most shocked, and it showed in his eyes. He had the utmost

confidence that a mid-stage Soul Ancestor would win against an early-stage Soul Ancestor.

And yet! The early-stage Soul Ancestor managed to kill the beast tamer with the help of an even weaker early-stage Soul Sprite!

This momentary pause in battle was only that, just a moment. The battle resumed quickly with Song Lin and Jiang Fan both considerably less worried than before. Their attacks reflected their emotions as they began to increase in tempo and ferocity, making their situation even better than before. After being forced back several times by Jiang Fan, the mid-stage Soul Exalt finally decided to give the late-stage Soul Ancestor behind him an order, “Kill those other two right now!!”

“Yes!”

Replying with an affirmative nod and shout, the man backed out of the battle. Underneath his feet, a greenish glow was picking up before immediately roaring to life as a furious gale that shot him to where Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun were!!

Jiang Fan and Song Lin were both startled by this; they didn’t think that the enemy forces would try to kill Bai Yunfei.

In a panicked warning, Song Lin shouted, “Yunfei, watch out!!”

He really wanted to stop that black-robed man, but there was no time. No sooner did he cry out that warning than the enemy forces spring up to attack him again. Jiang Fan was experiencing something similar in his head, and even though there was one less enemy to worry about, the worry he had for Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun was far greater. Thus, another fierce battle started between the four.

It would only take a little less than two minutes for the four to stop once again...

A heart-stopping amount of elemental fire burst into existence along with the furious howls of Bai Yunfei, prompting the four of

them to turn their heads again.

They were just in time to see the late-stage Soul Ancestor running almost desperately back in full retreat followed by the awe-inspiring Cataclysmic Seal.

Shortly before the four men could really fully understand the situation, they saw the black-robed man sent flying into the air. Then after that, the strange soul armament made an immediate drop down into the earth.

And just like that, the man's aura was gone!

He was dead!!

“Wh—what is...” The Soul Exalt found himself rather sluggish; though he was a Soul Exalt, he could still hardly believe what he was seeing.

Song Lin was astounded from what he was seeing, and joy lit up his eyes as he thought, “That’s Yunfei’s lifebound armament!”

He was the first to respond out of everyone else, pulling Jiang Fan back with him. By the time the mid-stage Soul Exalt realized what the two had done, they were already half a kilometer away. The two of them knew that retreating any more would be foolhardy, so they readied themselves for combat again.

But the black-robed man didn’t give chase either. Instead, he continued to look down at the crater left behind by the Cataclysmic Seal in a state of clear shock.

“Boom...”

Several seconds later, another explosion could be heard as the shining Cataclysmic Seal rose into the air to smash into the next two enemies with a roar from Bai Yunfei!

“Again!?”

The two men were shocked. Bai Yunfei was only an early-stage Soul Ancestor, but the terrifying soul armament of his and the fact

that it was able to come flying toward them to attack was completely beyond what the two men had thought was possible.

The one attacking them now was an early-stage Soul Ancestor, but neither of the two were willing to underestimate him now. Splitting away from one another to dodge, the black-robed man transformed into a blur as he traveled to the right while the beast tamer elder on the bird made a sharp ascent into the air.

Like lightning, the Cataclysmic Seal arrived right in front of them as they were moving off. The mid-stage Soul Exalt was incredibly fast. He was able to travel several hundred meters in a matter of seconds to escape the Cataclysmic Seal's range. As such, the soul armament came to a halt as if to give up on him and rose into the air to give chase to the beast tamer.

The beast tamer's eyes dilated in fear upon seeing the Cataclysmic Seal start to chase him. If this were to continue, he'd be unable to dodge the soul armament. With just a small moment of hesitation, the man let out a grunt as his entire body burst into a violet glow. Stomping on the back of the bird soulbeast he was on, he leaped over a dozen meters into the sky. The area beneath his feet materialized in yet another glow of violet light as he made use of materialized elemental lightning to create a foothold for him to leap back up into the air. Each time his feet stepped off of the elemental lightning, there was a slight cracking sound before he ascended again. By borrowing this power, he was able to ascend into the sky like a violet lightning bolt going in reverse.

To overcome the wall that was the Cataclysmic Seal, the beast tamer made use of the explosive elemental lightning to give himself one final push. Escaping past the height of the soul armament. It was after he made the leap that he realized he was already at a height where he shared a similar elevation with the nearby mountain tops.

“Damn! What kind of soul armament is this!? I’ve never heard of the Crafting School having such a monstrous soul armament like

this! What tier is it, mid-heaven? High-heaven, maybe?” The elder nearly cried out loud as he looked down at the Cataclysmic Seal beneath him.

He let out a sigh as he looked around himself, “This was a failure, how unexpected... there’s even more powerful people inbound. I must make my escape!”

With a new plan in mind, the man prepared to leap higher into the air to retreat.

Just two jumps and fifty meters higher into the air, a shiver shot up his spine! Jerking his head down, the man’s face drained of its color as a shocking sight registered in his eyes.

The Cataclysmic Seal that had buried itself behind him was suddenly... flying up to attack him again!

By the time the beast tamer jerked his head to look at the Cataclysmic Seal, the soul armament had already ‘pulled’ into the air, and under his terrified gaze, it flew up to strike him down!!

Chapter 260: The End of a Battle

By the time the beast tamer jerked his head to look at the Cataclysmic Seal, the soul armament had already ‘pulled’ into the air, and under his terrified gaze, it flew up to strike him down!!

If he could scream, the man would surely have this to say to the heavens, “Don’t joke with me!! How could a whelp, an early-stage Soul Ancestor have such a strong control over a strong soul armament like this!?”

The shine from the Cataclysmic Seal was enough to send the elder into a fluster, but he wasn’t stupid enough to sit around and wait for his death. Pumping even more soulforce into his feet, he pushed against the air to travel as fast as he could to get out of the soul armament’s range.

“Bang!”

One loud crack later, the Cataclysmic Seal slammed into the elder’s body with a speed equally as fast as the elder. Unable to stop himself from coughing out a mouthful of blood, the pale-faced elder did his best to grit his teeth and use the momentum from when he was hit to aid his escape.

The next second caused the elder to feel yet another moment of despair!

A blaze of fire erupted forth from the Cataclysmic Seal and coiled around his body as if it were a snake!

The +10 effect of the Cataclysmic Seal: the Flame Twister!

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to activate 'Flame Twister' and restrict the mobility of another by 10% for a maximum of ten seconds.
Cooldown of 1 minute.

With the Cataclysmic Seal above the elder, it made an immediate descent down to the mountain peak below!

“Boom!!!”

This time, the immediate descent was far beyond terrifying in comparison to before. The resulting tremors were violent enough to kick the loose dust and stones into the air, and without any further obstructions, the Cataclysmic Seal embedded itself into the mountain!

With that, the hundred-meter-tall mountain collapsed to the ground!

The black-robed man, who was already kilometers away, paused momentarily at that with eyes filled with fear.

The aura of the beast tamer had been snuffed out a second ago!

“He’s dead... he’s dead!!!” The black-robed man cried out to himself in extreme disbelief. He was once part of a group of four: two Soul Exalts and two Soul Ancestors.

Yet, a single early-stage Soul Ancestor had wiped out three of them!!

Despite the restlessness and disbelief, his soulsense was confirming the reality of the situation.

Increasing his escape without even looking back, the man disappeared into a blur of shadows as he flew into a nearby forest and out of sight...

Time hadn’t even past two minutes since the appearance of the Cataclysmic Seal, but in those two minutes, a late-stage Soul Ancestor and an early-stage Soul Exalt had been killed without any resistance!!

The sole survivor, a mid-stage Soul Exalt, was forced to flee in fear despite being filled with bravado during the entirety of the fight before!!

.....

Both Jiang Fan and Song Lin were supporting each other by the shoulders as they stared blankly at the collapsed mountain in front of them and the almost fully buried body of the Cataclysmic Seal.

An early-stage Soul Exalt; squished to death by such a baffling entity!? He was a Soul Exalt! A being that could be said to be strong in any area without a doubt!!

“Ugh...” Jiang Fan hissed as the wounds on his body dragged him out of his daze. Swiftly after that, his head grew flushed before he let loose a cough of blood from his mouth.

Remembering that Jiang Fan was heavily injured with a start, Song Lin hurried to stabilize the swaying Jiang Fan. Song Lin himself was injured, but he was able to handle his wounds enough to ask Jiang Fan, “Jiang Fan , are you alright?”

Though Jiang Fan waved his hand and tried to reassure Song Lin, his wounds forced him to cough out yet another mouthful of blood. On his chest was a horrifyingly deep wound with several other major wounds adorning the other parts of his body. Were he any regular person, each one of these wounds would’ve been fatal. His left shoulder, though uninjured, had several strands of black energy twirling around as it drooped uselessly by his side.

It seemed that he was unable to move it.

All of a sudden, the sound of rocks and dirt being dislodged could be heard, causing the two men to look up in surprise. The very first thing they could see was an object coming out of the crater from where the Cataclysmic Seal crashed into the earth. Neither of the two were able to clearly see what the object was other than the fact that it was glowing red. It quickly shot off to their left to where Bai Yunfei was.

Back in its original form, the Cataclysmic Seal returned to Bai Yunfei’s side. From within the red light, a small fire came floating

out.

It was Bai Yunfei's essence fireseed.

The only thing was that the essence fireseed wasn't as bright as it once was. Not only was it dimmer, it was also smaller—similar to a flame that'd be snuffed out of existence if a small wind were to blow on it.

After the essence fireseed slowly melted back into Bai Yunfei's chest, his face went pale and sweatdrops began to drip down his face. It seemed as if he couldn't feel a thing, and even the zealous killing intent from before was nowhere to be seen and was replaced by a look of anxiety.

Lowering his head, Bai Yunfei began to take notice of what shape Tang Xinyun was in. Wisps of black energy intermittently rose from her face as if she had been cursed. Her eyes were closed shut, and her eyebrows were knit together. Her pearly-white teeth were clenched together as if suffering from an unimaginable amount of pain.

Her suffering was a stab to Bai Yunfei's heart. Regret flooded his mind in an endless wave as if he was being cursed by Mara.

He grabbed at Tang Xinyun's wrist and attempted to push his soulforce into her to help her heal, but when she let out a cry of pain from his attempt, he let go of her hand as quickly as he could.

There was some sort of bizarre energy in Tang Xinyun's body that was stopping Bai Yunfei's soulforce from entering her body, and his attempts to do so only served to make the pain even worse for her.

As if being swallowed, Tang Xinyun's soulforce was growing fainter and fainter. Bai Yunfei was at a complete flummox and a loss for what to do.

"Soulforce... oh right! The ring that can replenish soulforce!" A spark of realization popped into Bai Yunfei's mind. Tearing off the

soulforce replenishing ring on his left hand, he placed it on one of Tang Xinyun's fingers.

“Ungh...” Another pain-filled cry came from Tang Xinyun's mouth, but it wasn't as loud as before. In fact, she looked slightly more comfortable and relieved than before, though she was still in danger.

“It's not enough! Dammit, why do I only have one of those!!” Bai Yunfei cursed himself. From her situation, Bai Yunfei could infer that Tang Xinyun's soulforce was being eaten away faster than she could regain it. Not only was her soulforce being taken away, her very soul was being attacked!

Her life was in danger!

“I'll have to use the spirit accessories to stall for time!” Bai Yunfei decided as he fitted Tang Xinyun with the said accessories.

Just then, the sound of wind being displaced could be heard, causing Bai Yunfei to look up just in time to see a green light flying toward him. Within a single second, the light landed several meters away and disappeared to reveal two figures: Xiao Binzi and Cang Yu.

As soon as Cang Yu was seen, she flashed toward Tang Xinyun's side and cried out, “Xinyun, what's wrong!?”

Tang Xinyun wasn't even able to hear her, let alone reply...

Realizing help was here, Bai Yunfei was quick to start to beg the two to help him, “First elder, third elder! Please save Xinyun, something's eating away her soulforce!”

Cang Yu's face grew dark as she listened to Bai Yunfei. Studying Tang Xinyun's face with even more anxiety than before, she grabbed Tang Xinyun's hand and tried to transmit her soulforce into Xinyun.

“Third elder, don't do—” Nearly leaping up in surprise, Bai Yunfei was about to shout out a warning when Cang Yu's eyes

narrowed and she released Tang Xinyun's hand. Her reaction to Tang Xinyun predicament was far faster than Bai Yunfei's, so Tang Xinyun didn't feel any pain when Cang Yu pulled back.

Gravely, Cang Yu turned her head to Xiao Binzi, "Senior, Xinyun is in an odd predicament. This isn't something elemental darkness should normally cause..."

"Eh?" Xiao Binzi muttered as he moved toward Bai Yunfei. He stared at Tang Xinyun for several seconds before pressing against her right arm with his own hand. After a moment's study, his eyes flashed brightly as if discovering something.

"First elder, what's wrong with Xinyun? Please save her!" Even though Bai Yunfei could tell that Xiao Binzi was deep in thought, he still couldn't help but plead with him.

Xiao Binzi nodded slowly, "Yunfei, don't worry. Her life is not in danger..."

Bai Yunfei felt relieved at that, "Really? He asked, "As long as Xinyun isn't in trouble, that's go—"

Before he could finish what he wanted to say, Bai Yunfei felt a wave of lightheadedness hit him. The next second, Bai Yunfei felt his body lock up, and his eyes fluttered before he fell to his knees and fainted.

Chapter 261: Damage to the Essence

Fireseed

Surprised by Bai Yunfei's sudden collapse, Xiao Binzi hurried to catch Bai Yunfei from falling to the ground.

When he pushed some soulforce into Bai Yunfei, Xiao Binzi was relieved to find that Bai Yunfei was only suffering from a lack of soulforce.

Then a second discovery caused his face to grow ashen with curiosity and anger.

Noticing the change on Xiao Binzi's face, Cang Yu was almost afraid to ask, "Senior, what's wrong?"

"First elder, third elder!"

Jiang Fan and Song Lin came over at that point with the both of them supporting each other up. Upon seeing the state of Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun, Song Lin began to panic, "First elder, how are Yunfei and Xinyun?"

Eyeing the wounds on Jiang Fan's body, Xiao Binzi's eyes narrowed slightly. He moved to the male's side and held his right hand out to Jiang Fan's left hand to push some soulforce into him. Jiang Fan grunted from the sudden pain and his forehead began to sweat as the black miasma from his left shoulder started to burn because of Xiao Binzi's elemental fire. Even his wounds were starting to heal at an accelerated rate thanks to Xiao Binzi. The pain was almost unbearable, but Jiang Fan's face was already looking much better than before. Before, he was on the verge of collapse due to his wounds, but he managed to hold himself together with pure determination alone. With Xiao Binzi here to help him with his wounds, Jiang Fan wouldn't be in any danger.

Xiao Binzi took back his hand as soon as the elemental darkness in Jiang Fan's shoulder was removed. He looked around the

destroyed battlefield curiously, his eyes stopping for a small moment on the crater left behind on the mountain, “What happened here? Why has Yunfei’s essence fireseed been weakened to the point of being extinguished!?”

“What!? Yunfei’s essence fir—!” Cang Yu gasped. The realization of why Xiao Binzi was acting the way he was earlier suddenly hit Cang Yu. The essence seed was something every soul cultivator in the Soul Sprite realm and beyond depended on. Soul Sprites could control the elements of the world, but aside from using their soulforce to maintain their control, the rest would depend on their essence seed. (This is in regards to one’s own materialization and control, not when a soul armament does it). Healing an injured essence seed was extremely difficult, and there were many whose essence seed would never be able to make a complete recovery!!

From what Xiao Binzi was saying, Bai Yunfei’s essence fireseed was practically extinguished with how weak it was... if it couldn’t be healed, that meant that Bai Yunfei would never be able to make any progress with his elemental fire!

Song Lin blanched. Guilt and worry flooded his mind as he thought about how he had failed to protect Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun. The fingers on his fist clenched tightly against each other as he replied swiftly to Xiao Binzi, “I think just a while ago, Yunfei used his essence fireseed to strengthen his lifebound armament...”

“What!?” Xiao Binzi exclaimed, “Using his essence fireseed to strengthen his lifebound armament!! That’s...”

He looked back to Bai Yunfei. With a regretful sigh, Xiao Binzi shook his head, “To think Yunfei would do such a rash action... we are lucky that his essence fireseed is still in existence. This feat is only something that can be done with a lifebound armament...”

Spreading his soulsense a kilometer away, Xiao Binzi’s tone grew icy, “And the enemies? Have they run off?”

Earlier, Cang Yu said that there had been four people that had

attacked her and Jiang Fan, but he could only sense the corpse of the middle-aged beast tamer Tang Xinyun killed. If the other three were trying to escape, he'd be sure to destroy them!

Jiang Fan pointed a finger in the direction the black-robed survivor had run off with a shake of his head, "Only the strongest survivor, a mid-stage Soul Exalt, managed to escape. It's been a while, so I'm afraid the first elder wouldn't have an easy time finding and catching up to him..."

"Eh? Just him? What of the other two?" Xiao Binzi asked.

"Aside from the mid-stage Soul Ancestor, there was also a late-stage Soul Ancestor and an early-stage Soul Exalt beast tamer..." Song Lin paused to take a breath.

"They... they were both killed by Yunfei..."

"..." Xiao Binzi and Cang Yu were both silent for a second. Under the impression that he had heard wrong, Xiao Binzi asked, "What did you say?"

Song Lin repeated the shocking news for the two elders to hear again, but it was no surprise that the first elder was still surprised. "The mid-stage Soul Ancestor was killed by both Yunfei and Xinyun, and then Bai Yunfei used his lifebound armament to kill the other two because Xinyun was seriously hurt. His lifebound armament was... able to grow a thousand times larger than what it was? Even the early-stage Soul Exalt was unable to defend himself before being crushed to death in that ruined mountain..."

"A thousand times bigger!!" Came the mental thought of Xiao Binzi. Looking back at Bai Yunfei while deep in thought, he said, "We shouldn't stay here. Yunfei and Xinyun are in a very special predicament. We must carefully observe them to know how to best treat them!"

"First elder," Jiang Fan spoke up, "I propose that we go to the house of Xiao in Curopia City then."

Taking a second to consider the proposal, Xiao Binzi then nodded his head, “Very well. We shall go there!”

.....

By the time Bai Yunfei had regained awareness, he noticed that he was lying on top of a very soft bed. He wanted to sit up, but his body refused to listen to him. Uttering an involuntary grunt, Bai Yunfei tried to summon his soulforce to him.

“Ah!! Lord Bai is awake! Lord Bai is awake!!” His voice had alerted the nearby maid who was attending to him, causing her to run out to call for the others.

Full body autonomy came to Bai Yunfei a moment later. His mind was still in a haze and even opening his eyes was a struggle, but he could at the very least sit up in bed like he wanted.

“Yunfei, how are you feeling?”

An elderly voice asked Bai Yunfei from the side, causing him to start. Lifting his head, Bai Yunfei managed to see the first elder Xiao Binzi standing in front of him. Both Jiang Fan and Song Lin were standing behind the elder as they looked at him in concern.

“First elder... I...” Gently shaking his head to rid himself of the fuzz, Bai Yunfei suddenly swung his head to look at Xiao Binzi in alarm, “First elder! How’s Xinyun? Is she okay?”

Pressing gently against Bai Yunfei’s shoulder, Xiao Binzi calmly replied to calm him down, “Don’t get too worked up. Xinyun is being looked after Cang Yu right now. She is fine.”

“Whew...” A relieved sigh escaped from Bai Yunfei’s lips. Now that he was reassured, his panicked mind was finally starting to calm back down.

There was still something that made him restless, “I’ll... I’ll take a look then...”

His legs swung over the bed onto the ground. Right as the first

step was about to be had, Bai Yunfei found himself suddenly staggering back down onto his bed as if his body was powerless to support himself.

Stunned, Bai Yunfei tried to circulate his soulforce to heal his tired body. When he tried, the results surprised him. He held his hands up and looked at them with wide open eyes as if he couldn't believe what he was seeing.

Upon seeing Bai Yunfei's reaction, Xiao Binzi couldn't help but sigh. "Yunfei, you shouldn't worry about Xinyun. Her wounds are stabilized for the time being, but you should listen to me, you're..."

He hadn't finished speaking when Bai Yunfei jerked his head up in panic and confusion.

"What's... what's going on!? First elder, I... why can't I feel any elemental fire in me!?"

Chapter 262: The Consequences of a Chaotic Explosion

The Soul Sprite realm was when the essence seed formed. This was also the realm where manipulation of the elements was possible and the temperance of the body with said elements could be done. Soulfence wasn't the only thing that circulated around the body of a Soul Sprite, the elements would circulate around the body as well with the essence seed at their core. Together, they worked with one another to strengthen the body, and when the elements in the world needed to be controlled, the essence seed would use the elements in the body as a primer to gather and condense the elements into a stronger, more tangible form.

As of right now, Bai Yunfei couldn't feel even a single strand of that elemental fire in him!!

This was a first since he had become a Soul Sprite many months ago. It made him feel both powerless and confused.

Xiao Binzi sighed when he saw the flustered look on Bai Yunfei's face. "Yunfei, feel for your essence fireseed right now..."

"Eh?" Puzzled at the request, Bai Yunfei closed his eyes and did as Xiao Binzi asked. Concentrating on the essence fireseed at the core of his person, Bai Yunfei was able to 'see' a minute flame that flickered gently where it was.

When he 'saw' his essence fireseed, Bai Yunfei could feel a slight sensation of 'warmth.' There was a very faint--practically imperceivable--wisp of elemental fire that drifted out of the essence fireseed. When it drifted too far away, the feeling of warmth was lost to Bai Yunfei.

"My essence fireseed is still there..." Bai Yunfei sighed in relief. The very worst of his suspicions were cleared, but upon further investigation, Bai Yunfei could tell that the essence fireseed was a

lot weaker than before. In fact, Bai Yunfei had the slight feeling that if he were to spread his soulsense out, it'd be enough to 'blow' out the essence fireseed...

The consumption of soulforce had never been a problem for him before. No matter how much he used, or how the Upgrade Technique knocked him unconscious, his essence fireseed always remained lively and bright as ever. This situation right now was a first for Bai Yunfei. He tried to materialize some essence fireseed as an experiment, but absolutely nothing could be felt.

With that observation, Bai Yunfei pulled himself out from his trance helplessly and reopened his eyes.

"First elder..." He looked back at Xiao Binzi, but he was no longer as emotional as he was before. This time, his eyes were filled with confusion and helplessness.

A strand of pity flickered across Xiao Binzi's eyes. "Yunfei," He sighed, "You were too rash. Conserving your essence fireseed was already difficult enough, but... even I cannot help you now. Even brother Zi Jin cannot help you. A full recovery is fully dependent on your own body, but even then, that will take a very long time. For the time being, you cannot use your elemental fire. Unless you've another element to train in, you are limited to the soulforce any Soul Ancestor has without being able to make use of the world's elements..."

"....."

The silence in the room was palpable as Bai Yunfei raised his head. No one could tell what he was thinking at that moment, but at last, he prefaced his next words with a sigh, "First elder, where is Xinyun? I want to go see her..."

Xiao Binzi's eyebrows furrowed together. Looking at Bai Yunfei, he shook his head, "Yunfei, I'm sure even walking is an extremely difficult feat for you, is it not? Don't force yourself and focus on getting better first. Use your soulforce to heal your body. You can

see her after that.”

Song Lin chose that time to pipe up, “That’s right, Yunfei. Get better first. With the third elder, Xinyun will be fine so don’t worry. Who knows, maybe when you heal up she’ll be awake.”

Jiang Fan was slightly pale in the face, but even he nodded at Bai Yunfei. “Junior brother, I had no idea that you were a disciple of the master. I owe you for helping me, but allow me to thank you later. Listen to the first elder and focus on healing yourself.”

Bai Yunfei wanted nothing more than to go find Tang Xinyun right now, but he could see the reason in Xiao Binzi’s words. The very act of walking was something Bai Yunfei couldn’t do and even thinking was a problem right now. Thinking about it, Bai Yunfei finally replied, “Well... fine then...”

.....

For the sake of leaving Bai Yunfei to heal, Xiao Binzi and the others left the room so that only he was left alone to concentrate; though it was more so he could also calm down as well.

Seated on his bed, Bai Yunfei took out a spirit aiding accessory from his space ring. It didn’t have the ability to increase his soulforce recovery rate, but it would at the very least increase the amount of soulforce he could have. Bai Yunfei would make sure to take care of the injuries that required soulforce to heal first.

In accordance to what the Art of Training the Soul taught, Bai Yunfei made a strand of his soulforce circulate around his body. With each revolution, the amount of soulforce he maneuvered increased by a small margin. There weren’t any complications in his attempts, so Bai Yunfei was able to gradually build up the amount of soulforce in his body. This, in turn, made Bai Yunfei feel better than before. His mind had been hazy when he first woke up, but now he was feeling far more sharp-minded. Even his strength was returning to his previously weak body.

However, the very small sliver of elemental fire moving about his body left Bai Yunfei with an uneasy feeling.

Roughly three hours later...

His eyes slowly opened as a sign of him waking up from his trance. His soulforce wasn't fully recovered just yet, but it was enough for now. In his current state of affairs, mobility and regular thought could be done on the same level as any other commoner.

He wanted to try and gather some elemental fire to see how bad things were, but he knew that that couldn't be done at the moment.

‘Ugh...’ Bai Yunfei sighed in depression.

Without being able to use the elemental fire, he felt as if he was back to when he was a Soul Warrior. It was a disappointing feeling reminiscent to being reduced to a shade of his former self. Xiao Binzi had told him that recovery would be extremely hard and unpredictable; who knows when he'd be able to make a full recovery.

A month? A year? Several years? Or if ever...

He thought about the recent battle and how Tang Xinyun had thrown herself in front of him to stop the palm strike. The moments after that were when he had lost all sense of reasoning. The only thing he could remember was him destroying all the enemies and then using the Cataclysmic Seal imbued with his essence fireseed. He had no idea things would turn out this way or that what he did would have such a harsh consequence.

He was practically decrepit and confused, but Bai Yunfei didn't regret his actions. Bai Yunfei would be willing to repeat it all even if it were to happen again.

For the sake of ensuring the well-being of the girl who he cared about, he'd make whoever hurt her pay heavily for it!!

“As long as there’s hope, that’s fine by me. I just need to believe in myself, I will get better!” Bai Yunfei vowed silently to himself as he walked to the door.

“I’ll go see Xinyun first. With the heavens looking over her, Xinyun will definitely get better...”

Chapter 263: The Soul Refining School!

In the northern room of the household of Xiao in Curopia City—

A silent Bai Yunfei could be seen standing in front of Tang Xinyun's bed. His eyes wavered over her slightly pursed lips and the knit eyebrows on her face. The pain on her face was unbearable to Bai Yunfei. Each second spent looking at her was another stab to his heart.

Unwilling to reach his hand out to see how she was doing, Bai Yunfei instead looked to Cang Yu who was sitting to the side, "Third elder, how is... how is Xinyun? Has she woken up yet? When will she get better?"

Cang Yu herself looked unwell since the wounds she had suffered from the previous battle were by no means light. Not enough time had passed for her to fully heal, but for the sake of looking after Tang Xinyun, Cang Yu hadn't left her bedside for the entire night.

A display like that was only a symbol of just how much she cared for Tang Xinyun.

Cang Yu sighed, "Well... Xinyun's situation is even worse than we first thought. The elemental darkness in her body is extremely strange. Not only are we unable to force it out, the elemental darkness refuses to leave by itself either. It's as if it has taken root in her body and wishes to continue eating away at her soulforce."

She paused here to take a deep breath. "That black-robed man wasn't from the Beast Taming School without a doubt. Jiang Fan and I were both hit by his elemental darkness, but since we were stronger, the worst of the effects were blocked by our soulforce before it could enter too deep into our bodies. With the first elder aiding us, he was able to drive off the rest of it. But Xinyun is weaker than the two of us, so she had no way of defending against it. We were fortunate enough that it was only her shoulder that was hit. If that wound had just been a few inches to the left, I'm

afraid Xinyun would have lost her life...

“As of right now, there are two different energies fighting in her. One is the elemental darkness eating away at her soulforce, the other is Tang Xinyun’s soulforce. If all of it is eaten away, then Xinyun’s life would be in danger...

“The only way to recovery is to increase the rate of soulforce regeneration to fend off the elemental darkness, but Xinyun’s regeneration rate isn’t fast enough. It’s fortunate that I’ve given her the Violet Soul Bracelet. With that, her regeneration rate is fast enough to put her in a temporary stasis. Though, that doesn’t mean it’ll stay that way in the future...”

“Violet Soul Bracelet?” Bai Yunfei repeated. From what he just heard from Cang Yu, this bracelet was capable of increasing the rate of soulforce recovery!

Now was seriously not the time to be asking about that however. Tossing out the thought as quickly as it came into his mind, Bai Yunfei asked instead, “Then... when will Xinyun be able to wake up? What else do we have to do to eliminate the rest of the elemental darkness for a full recovery?”

Cang Yu shook her head. “In order to remove the elemental darkness, we’d have to make sure that Xinyun’s soulforce regeneration is a lot faster than the rate in which the elemental darkness is eating away at it. But... with Xinyun’s current strength, that’s not feasible. No outsider can help her with this either, so we don’t even know when she’ll wake up... in fact, we aren’t even sure if she’ll...”

She didn’t continue her sentence, but Bai Yunfei was fully aware of what she was getting at.

She wasn’t sure if Tang Xinyun would ever wake up.

“...” Bai Yunfei said nothing, but his eyes flickered as if he was thinking about something.

Cang Yu turned her head to face Xiao Binzi, “Senior, have you found something out?”

A grave nod came from Xiao Binzi, but no answer to Cang Yu’s question was said. He instead turned to Bai Yunfei to ask, “Yunfei, what happened when Xinyun was injured? Tell us what happened during that part of the battle.”

“Uhm...” Bai Yunfei nodded, “At that time...”

Line by line, Bai Yunfei retold his recollection of events from the battle. He told them how he had killed the mid-stage Soul Ancestor, how the late-stage Soul Ancestor came to ambush them, and how Tang Xinyun threw herself in front of him right in the middle of his utmost peril...

With each line said, Bai Yunfei’s voice grew heavier and heavier as if the regret and guilt he was filling started to drip into his words from his mind.

Both Cang Yu and Xiao Binzi were surprised to hear Bai Yunfei talk about the man’s ability to absorb soulforce, but their faces turned extremely sour when they heard about the killing move the late-stage Soul Ancestor tried to use on Bai Yunfei...

“Senior, couldn’t they be...” Cang Yu looked to Xiao Binzi to have him verify her suspicion.

Xiao Binzi nodded his head in response, “Indeed, those black-robed men are most likely men of the Soul Refining School!!”

“Soul Refining School?”

What Xiao Binzi said was enough to startle Jiang Fan, Song Lin, and even Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei didn’t know much about the school, but he at the very least knew that they were an infamous and terrifying group.

“If that’s the case, then... it’s no wonder they were able to use elemental darkness in such a strange way...” Cang Yu half-

muttered to herself. “The Soul Refining School!!” She nervously exclaimed, “If it’s them, then what Xinyun was hit with might be the ‘Soul Refining Palm’!”

Instead of replying this time, Xiao Binzi answered her with a nod.

“The Soul Refining School...”

“First elder, what is this ‘Soul Refining Palm’?” The fear in Bai Yunfei’s mind was even worse now, so he couldn’t help but ask for clarification.

“The Soul Refining Palm is a soul skill only the Soul Refining School knows. It would be better to say that it’s their signature skill. True to its name, the skill can refine the soul when used! The deceptive style of fighting where that man stole your soulforce is a soul skill only those from the Soul Refining School can learn...

“Only Soul Exalts are able to use the Soul Refining Palm to the best of its ability. That person was only a late-stage Soul Ancestor, so that is why Xinyun is still alive. But...

“To recover after being hit by the Soul Refining Palm makes the situation even worse than we thought...”

Hearing about the Soul Refining Palm from Xiao Binzi made Bai Yunfei even more worried. In his concern, Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but ask, “Then... first elder, can Xinyun be saved? What do we have to do to neutralize the Soul Refining Palm?”

Xiao Binzi shook his head as if the answer was fruitless. “The people from the Soul Refining School rarely venture out of their school, but even then, they are a secretive bunch that can’t be found easily. Those who are hit with the Soul Refining Palm rarely live to tell the tale... and that much is only in regards to their fighting style. The secrets of their school are things no outsider knows a lot about.”

“But... but Xinyun is...”

“All we can do right now is observe. Wait and see if Xinyun will

get better. We'll return to the Crafting School. Perhaps brother Zi Jin will know of a method. If anything, we can also ask the Northern Point to..."

"Ah! The Beast Taming School and the Sun!!" Bai Yunfei suddenly cut in, "The Soul Refining School and the Beast Taming School are with each other, they're the ones the house of Sun asked to help them!! We should go to the Sun! Maybe we'll find someone from there and force them to tell us!!"

His answer surprised the other people in the room. They had been completely focused on taking care of Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun so everything else was completely ignored. In their concentration, the root of their problems, the tiny and insignificant house of Sun, was completely overlooked.

"Yunfei is right, first elder. We should go to the Sun and see!"

"Very well then!" Xiao Binzi announced after a moment of thought.

Cang Yu was left behind to look after Tang Xinyun while Xiao Binzi brought the others with him out of the courtyard. Though Bai Yunfei wanted to go with them, Xiao Binzi was adamant that he stayed behind.

Just as Xiao Binzi and the others were about to leave the courtyard, the head of the Xiao could be seen rushing after them.

"Uncle Xiao," Jiang Fan was surprised. "What's going on?"

"Elder Xiao, Jiang Fan, Song Lin, and lord Bai..." Xiao Rang greeted them with a serious voice, but his next few words were met with extreme shock.

"Just last night, the house of Sun was completely destroyed!!"

Chapter 264: Self Blame

In a single night, the house of Sun was completely wiped off the face of Curopia City!!

Like a hurricane, news of their annihilation tore through the city in massive waves. Struck with this information, everyone in Curopia City turned their attention to the suspect, the house of Xiao.

Though the ones responsible for the destruction of the Sun had left no traces behind, the rivalry between the Xiao and the Sun was known to everyone, so it wasn't strange for everyone to suspect them.

Even the lord mayor of Curopia City took a wait-and-see approach to their rivalry. It was the soul cultivator's equivalent to the impenetrable shield and the all piercing spear between two households. Since the officials of the empire wanted to avoid a major conflict, they turned a blind eye toward many conflicts.

The complete genocide of the house of Sun was not something they could sit by the sidelines for. An order from the lord mayor issued for an investigation to be done while he went to meet with a representative of the Xiao himself.

The lord mayor of Curopia City was a disciple of the Heavenly Soul School and was a late-stage Soul Exalt.

By no means was the lord mayor an easy target to bully with him being from the Heavenly Soul School, so when Xiao Rang heard that the lord mayor was coming, the very first thing he did was to seek out Xiao Binzi and the others to testify that the destruction of the Sun was not a crime perpetrated by the Xiao.

What really happened was that the Xiao household was far too busy taking care of Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun when Xiao Binzi and the others returned that night. The two wounded people were

of the utmost importance to both Xiao Rang and Xiao Xin. They had spent the entire night ordering their men to accommodate the needs of the Crafting School. Other than that, neither of the two gave any other orders besides to keep a tighter watch—just in case the Sun was preparing to do anything that night.

To be even more honest, the Xiao had no means to completely destroy the house of Sun in a single night without anyone knowing.

Xiao Binzi and the others were equally surprised to hear that the house of Sun was destroyed, but the reason for such wasn't hard to imagine.

This was without a doubt done so that the Beast Taming School and the Soul Refining School could wipe their hands clean of the house of Sun. What was alarming was their efficiency; the Sun wasn't weak house, but in the end, they were destroyed at a moment's notice.

Both Jiang Fan and Song Lin went with Xiao Rang to testify to the lord mayor while Xiao Binzi went to the ruins of the Sun to see if he could find any traces.

Bai Yunfei returned to his room to recuperate, and his room was now right next to Tang Xinyun's.

.....

Later that afternoon, Bai Yunfei found himself seated on top of a banister with his back to the stone pillar. His head was lifted high to the sky, but the expression on his face was vacant.

Just thinking about what had happened yesterday was enough for Bai Yunfei to clench his fingers so tightly that blood was drawn from his fingernails. Self-loathing and regret filled his mind with increasing amounts rather than lessening like he originally thought.

“It was my fault. All my fault... if I wasn't so confident in myself,

Xinyun wouldn't have been in that battle. She wouldn't have been in danger. She would've been safe! It's my fault..." Now that he could think about yesterday, Bai Yunfei could finally see how laughable and overconfident he was.

Shaking his head, Bai Yunfei turned his head back to the cloud-filled sky, "I've some strength and the Upgrade Technique, but when did I become so arrogant?

"Finding trouble for myself was enough. Why'd I have to go and involve Xinyun in this?

"Why do I always need someone else to save me?

"Why did I promise that she'd be fine and then lead her straight into danger?

"Why isn't it me that's lying there instead of Xinyun?

"Why wasn't I the one to die!!!!"

"Bang!!"

A furious hand came up to slap his face.

Following a mouthful of blood, Bai Yunfei looked down at his own hand in stunned silence.

"Hero, this is my last warning to you. Be sure to avoid trouble and keep those you care about close, else you will find regret to be the only thing left in your embrace!!"

For some strange reason, the voice of the one known as Na Lanyin, from when Bai Yunfei went to Redfire City, popped up in his head. In accordance to what the fortune teller told him, the regret and confusion he was feeling intensified.

"I... I really will regret this for my entire life..."

He turned to the wall that separated his and Tang Xinyun's room. Her faint aura could still be felt, but it pained Bai Yunfei to feel it so faint. Each time he sensed her, Bai Yunfei could feel her soulforce grow weaker, and that realization was like a sharp blade

that continued to push into his heart deeper and deeper.

“Xinyun will... she’ll be fine!” The self-loathing and regret slowly bled away from Bai Yunfei’s eyes as determination and grit replaced it. “I can’t let her get worse. I won’t let her get worse!”

“Even if I can’t find the Soul Refining School and force a way out of them, I’ll find a way myself! I’ll do it! I must do it!!

“Increase her soulforce regeneration rate? I’ve the Upgrade Technique, I’ll just make some myself!!”

Renewed hope roared to life within his heart as Bai Yunfei walked out of his room without hesitation.

“Eh? Brother Bai, where are you going?”

No sooner did he make it into the courtyards than a short-haired young male in rich purple robes appeared. Right behind him were several maids with platters of food in their hands.

“Lord Xiao...” Bai Yunfei nodded his head to the young man in front of him. This was the fourth grandchild to the head of the Xiao, Xiao Er.

“Where is brother Bai going? If something needs to be done, please ask our men. Brother Bai’s body isn’t fully healed yet, you should head back and rest.” Xiao Er nodded back to Bai Yunfei, “Father instructed me to bring brother Bai some rare medicines in hopes that brother Bai will be able to heal...”

Surprised by the gesture, Bai Yunfei cupped his hands in gratitude, “I... thank brother Xiao for your troubles. I do not believe I require these medicines, but please thank your father and his kindness for me.”

“Brother Bai is an honored guest of our Xiao; this much should be expected.” Xiao Er shook his hands with a smile, “These medicines are of rather normal make, but they have good effects on the body. Give them a try, brother Bai. Although it won’t help with soulforce, your body will definitely feel itself recovering faster.”

“Then... I’ll take these to my room.” Bai Yunfei relented. He didn’t want to bother with refusing them.

A thought popped up in his mind after that, “Brother Xiao. If I may ask a request from you...”

“Oh?” Xiao Er was confused at first, but then he smiled. “All brother Bai needs to do is ask! No matter what it is, as long as I can do it, I will! And if I can’t, then the Xiao will. I’ll have grandfather send someone to do it if you want.”

“No, there’s no need to disturb the elders.” Bai Yunfei shook his head, “I need a lot of accessories. I hope that brother Xiao will help me in purchasing some.”

“Wha—accessories!?” Xiao Er had been under the impression that Bai Yunfei would ask for some sort of precious treasure, but hearing that he wanted accessories instead made him feel as if he had misheard him.

“Correct, accessories. I hope that you’ll help me purchase some in the city. The more precious, the better, but I only need accessories. It doesn’t matter how many, I need them all!”

He wanted to take out some gold coins from his space ring, but Bai Yunfei remembered that the one with all his gold coins was the one that was helping Xinyun recover her soulforce. Shaking his right arm instead, Bai Yunfei took out a greenish sword about a meter long and handed it over to Xiao Er.

“Brother Xiao, I give this soul armament to you as a token of my thanks. I hope that you’ll bring me as many accessories as you can!”

Chapter 265: Upgrading Accessories

Xiao Er looked at the sword in his hand in utter befuddlement; he wasn't even fully aware when Bai Yunfei continued to speak to him.

Too many things were happening for him to really understand the situation. Bai Yunfei wanted him to buy accessories of all things, and from what he was saying, it didn't matter what type of accessories as long as Xiao Er bought a lot of them. This only served to confuse Xiao Er even more.

“Brother Xiao, this matter is extremely important to me. Please!!” Bai Yunfei spoke with a grave face.

Seeing that Bai Yunfei wasn't joking with him, Xiao Er decided to put away his suspicions. “I don't understand what brother Bai wants with them, but... I'll do it! This won't be a problem; we have plenty of accessories on hand. I'll have some men bring them over at once!”

He looked back down at the sword in his hands in confusion. Since he was only a mid-stage Soul Warrior, he had very limited dealings with soul armaments, so he wasn't able to tell how strong the soul armament was. One thing was for sure, this soul armament was surely stronger than the low-human tier one his grandfather had taken from one of his dead enemies.

The sword shook a little in his hand from his hesitance, but Xiao Er finally tore his eyes away from it long enough to push it back to Bai Yunfei, “Something this minor shouldn't warrant such a precious gift like this. Please take it back, brother Bai, or I'll feel ashamed for having taken it...”

It was clearly obvious to see that Xiao Er took a fancy to this sword, but for him to refuse it even then? Bai Yunfei found a newfound level of respect for Xiao Er.

“I’ve said it before,” Bai Yunfei shook his head, “This matter is extremely important to me. The reason I need these accessories might be beyond you, brother Xiao, but I can’t explain the reason just yet. If you can help me make the purchases, then this soul armament should be yours as my thanks. I would feel unwell if you didn’t.”

His honesty was so apparent that even Xiao Er found it hard to refuse now (He didn’t want to refuse either in truth). Several seconds later, Xiao Er took the sword with a solemn expression, “Brother Bai, don’t worry. As long as you need them, I’ll prepare them for you even if I have to clear out the entire city of accessories!!”

“Perhaps... perhaps that will be necessary...” Bai Yunfei’s voice was so inaudible that Xiao Er had almost missed it.

“Eh? What was that, brother Bai?”

“Oh, it’s nothing... I’ll be waiting in my room then. Please send them over straight away when you have the first few, brother Xiao.”

“No worries, I’ll instruct my men to send some right now!”

.....

Xiao Er left quickly after that, leaving Bai Yunfei free to return to his room only to notice that Xiao Er’s maids had already left a platter of food and medicines of varying rarity. Many of them were commonplace goods, but he had never once used these medicines before.

After everything today, Bai Yunfei was feeling slightly peckish, so he ate from the platter first before resting on top of his bed.

Not long later, a maid came into his room to present to him a space ring with all the accessories Xiao Er managed to find in Curopia City so far. After receiving Bai Yunfei’s gift of thanks, Xiao Er went into the city himself to do as Bai Yunfei asked, but even if

he hadn't received a gift, there was no way Xiao Er would be negligent in his role as Bai Yunfei's host.

Now that he was on his bed, Bai Yunfei looked at the space ring given to him. At a precursory glance, Bai Yunfei could see that there were over a thousand accessories in there, causing Bai Yunfei to be surprised. According to what Xiao Er said, this must be the ones the Xiao already had—a tremendous amount already, but with all these accessories, Xiao Er would most definitely be the target of anger of many of the females in the Xiao. In the future, Xiao Er would definitely have to apologize properly to all of them.

“Well... let's start then!”

With a small sigh to calm himself, Bai Yunfei took a purple ring first.

Equipment Grade: High

Elemental Affinity: None

Upgrade Requirement: 6 Soulpoints

After looking at the stats, Bai Yunfei thought to himself, “Upgrade.”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High

Elemental Affinity: None

Upgrade Level: +1

Additional Attribute: +2 Strength

Upgrade Requirement: 7 Soulpoints

“Increases strength, that's useless...” Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes.

Putting away the ring, Bai Yunfei took out another jade bracelet and thought to himself, “Upgrade.”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High
Elemental Affinity: None
Upgrade Level: +1
Additional Attribute: +2 Agility
Upgrade Requirement: 7 Soulpoints

Once again, Bai Yunfei swapped out the bracelet for a new ring.
“Upgrade.”

.....
Several minutes later, Bai Yunfei had already gone through eight accessories before he finally got the attribute he wanted...

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High
Elemental Affinity: None
Upgrade Level: +1
Additional Attribute: +2 Spirit
Upgrade Requirement: 7 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei sighed as he looked at the amber necklace in his hand, “Finally an accessory that increases spirit. The chances of one of these appearing is really small... so far, I’ve probably created less than a hundred of these out of a thousand accessories. The chances of them reaching +10 are even lower, and then even those who have the effect of increasing regeneration rate was even smaller...”

The more Bai Yunfei thought about it, the more depressed he became. At first mention, a thousand accessories were very good, but in the end, it would be very likely that not a single one would be left.

“This isn’t enough, but Xiao Er’s going to the city to buy some more. I shouldn’t have to worry about the quantity for now.” Bai Yunfei thought to himself, “I’ll take a look at these ones first and pick out the spirit increasing ones before I upgrade them. That should last me the entire night...

“I hope that a soulforce regenerating accessory comes soon...” Bai Yunfei prayed to himself before picking up the one spirit increasing accessory again.

“Upgrade!”

.....

With each accessory upgraded, Bai Yunfei sorted them in accordance to what their effects were and grouped them together. This sort of classification had been done once before when he gave several accessories to Jing Mingfeng, so he had some experience in this aspect. Therefore, sorting was relatively quick, and within a single hour, Bai Yunfei had each and every single one of the thousand accessories compiled in neat piles.

So far, he had one hundred sixty-three accessories that could increase spirit. Many of them were ‘High’ grade while the rest were ‘Superior.’

After resting and recovering his soulforce, Bai Yunfei took one of the many upgraded accessories into his hand. With two deep breaths, Bai Yunfei then upgraded the item to +8.

Any upgrade after this meant the destruction of the equipment if he failed. After going through all of the one hundred sixty-three accessories, Bai Yunfei noted that only thirty-nine of them were able to reach the +9 level...

With that final notice, Bai Yunfei blacked out.

He came to a start when he realized that it was already daybreak of the following day. Staring at the earring in his hand, Bai Yunfei muttered, “This next part is the most important part! May the heavens grant me a chance to get a soulforce regenerating effect!!”

“Upgrade!”

Upgrade Failed
Equipment Destroyed

“...” Bai Yunfei shook his head after a moment of silence. Dusting the powder off his hands, Bai Yunfei took another one of the +9 accessories and proceeded to upgrade it.

Failure, failure, and failure...

It wasn’t until the sixth equipment when...

Chapter 266: A Worsening Injury

Upgrade Successful
Equipment Grade: High Elemental Affinity: None Upgrade Level: +10 Additional Attribute: +56 Spirit +10 Additional Effect: Lessen damage from spirit-related injuries by 3% Upgrade Requirement: 33 Soulpoints

Another never-before-seen effect! In the past Bai Yunfei would’ve leapt at the chance to research this effect, but this time, he only shook his head in disappointment, “Ugh... this doesn’t regenerate soulforce...”

After putting away the jade necklace, Bai Yunfei took out a silver ring and proceeded to upgrade it...

.....

Upgrade Failed
Equipment Destroyed

With the final +9 accessory turning to dust, Bai Yunfei could only look vacantly at the dust as it flowed through his fingers in disappointment.

Out of the thirty-nine +9 pieces of equipment, only five of them managed to become +10. Having five pieces of +10 equipment was

already a decent sum since the chances of being able to upgrade any equipment to +10 was drastically lower after he had become a Soul Ancestor. Out of a hundred of the equipment below Superior in grade, only two of them were able to become +10. Statistics like that were in accordance to what obtained before. Even though he had roughly the same chances as he did before, Bai Yunfei could infer that there was a correlation to be found when he had some elemental fire in him and when he didn't.

Bai Yunfei had no desire to research that now. All he could think about was the sadness of it all—to have only five +10 accessories with none of them being able to regenerate soulforce. He was aware of such an outcome, but he still couldn't help but feel disappointed.

Of the five +10 pieces of equipment he had: two of them were rings, one was a bracelet, and the other two were earrings.

Clenching the five accessories, Bai Yunfei snarled, “If +10 won't do, then I'll make them +12!”

Focusing on one of the rings, he thought, “Upgrade!”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High
Elemental Affinity: None
Upgrade Level: +11
Additional Attribute: +79 Spirit

+10 Additional Effect: Increase spirit by an additional 50 points.
Upgrade Requirement: 43 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei's eyes sparkled at the result, “Haha, it really succeeded!!”

He snatched the second ring with renewed vigor, “Upgrade!” he

thought excitedly.

Upgrade Failed
Equipment Destroyed

Bai Yunfei’s face froze as he watched the equipment disintegrate into dust before sighing to pick up a jade bracelet.

“Upgrade.”

Upgrade Failed
Equipment Destroyed

.....

Upgrade Failed
Equipment Destroyed

.....

Out of the five +10 pieces of equipment he started with, only one was left.

This was a situation Bai Yunfei had come across plenty of times by now. Despite that, he still couldn’t help but feel a great deal of disappointment this time, especially now that he was feeling sad. He had been extremely eager to upgrade one accessory to regenerate soulforce so that he could help save Xinyun, but with

nothing appearing so far, he was unable to accept this outcome.

There was a look of unease as Bai Yunfei eyed the remaining +11 ring in his hand. Biting his lip, Bai Yunfei shook his right hand to retrieve a small white stone.

Unique Equipment

Equipment Grade: Mid Human

Elemental Affinity: None

Special Effect 1: Increase the chance of success when upgrading by 10)%.
Cannot be stacked with the effect of another item.

Additional Effect 2: Increase the chance of success when crafting by 50%.
Cannot be stacked with the effect of another item.

Cannot be upgraded

What he took out was the upgrade stone!

Determined, Bai Yunfei spoke to himself, “I have to succeed! I have to find an item with the recovery effect! I will save Xinyun, I must!!”

“Upgr—”
“Chirrp!!”

Just as Bai Yunfei was about to upgrade the +11 ring, the sound of a panicked chirp flooded his ears, snapping him out of his trance.

“Xiao Bai!” Bai Yunfei cried out. This chirp was a very familiar one; it was the quickshade bird of Tang Xinyun!

“No! Xinyun!!”

With practically no hesitation at all, Bai Yunfei leaped up from his bed. He tossed away the upgrade stone and ring and flew out of his room. Dashing through the doors, he leaped over the presiding

wall to reach the other courtyard to reach the room where Tang Xinyun was.

As soon as he entered the room, Bai Yunfei could see Xiao Binzi and the others seated there. Cang Yu was seated right next to the bed with an anxious look on her face as she gripped Tang Xinyun's wrist. Xiao Binzi stood stone-faced behind Cang Yu while Jiang Fan and Song Lin both stood behind him with equally anxious faces.

Running to Tang Xinyun's bed, Bai Yunfei could see her extremely pale face was completely drenched with sweat. The strands of black energy coming off her face were extremely strange to see, and she looked like she was in extreme pain. Her face was scrunched up, and her teeth nipped at her lower lip hard enough to draw blood.

The quickshade bird was the size of a very large bird as it lay by her right hand. Its head nestled against her right arm as it transmitted its soulforce into her body. The chirp earlier was from Xiao Bai, but now, the bird's voice was barely audible as it appeared to be chirping softly into Xinyun's ear.

Bai Yunfei turned to Xiao Binzi, "First elder... what's happening to Xinyun? Wasn't she stabilized? What happened now?"

Xiao Binzi sighed, "The Refining Soul Palm made its first outburst, and the resulting power wasn't something we were expecting. At first, Xinyun's soulforce was completely swallowed, but thankfully Xiao Bai was here to give her some of its soulforce. Since they have a soul contract with one another, Xiao Bai's soulforce wasn't rejected by Xinyun's body, but the corrosive power of the Refining Soul Palm is really far too strong; even as a fifth-tier soulbeast, Xiao Bai's soulforce is nearly running out..."

If a fifth-tier soulbeast like Xiao Bai was nearly out of soulforce, the implications of what were happening with Tang Xinyun didn't even need to be said.

It was as though a bucket of ice-cold water was dropped over Bai

Yunfei. “Then... what about medicine!? First elder, you’re a Soul King, there must be some sort of treasure that’ll help her, right!? Isn’t there any medicine that could save her?”

Tapping a finger against his chin, Xiao Binzi sighed, “What medicine I had was... already administered to Xinyun that first night when you were asleep. The Xiao only has a few medicines as it is, and we’ve already used up all of theirs...”

Bai Yunfei fell silent.

“Since those medicines didn’t work, there’s really only one method left...”

Bai Yunfei’s head snapped up when he heard that last remark in hope, “What method is there? What is it? First elder, please tell me!”

It was Cang Yu who answered him rather than Xiao Binzi. “The last method the first elder mentioned is... to dissipate Xinyun’s essence fireseed. By harnessing that energy, she should be able to fend off the corrosive energy...”

“That’s...” Bai Yunfei’s body froze up as he realized what Cang Yu was getting at. Using up Xinyun’s essence fireseed was basically using up her cultivation; which in turn meant she would return to being a Soul Warrior!?

Furthermore, to recondense essence fireseed was practically impossible. It was a feat that was hundreds or even a thousand times harder than Bai Yunfei’s attempt to regenerate his essence fireseed...

“Chirp!!”

It was at this moment that Xiao Bai let loose a chirp to alert the others in the room. Turning their heads, everyone could see the faint black wisp over Tang Xinyun’s body immediately flew toward her chest! In a flash of green light, Xiao Bai sent its soulforce into her body to start the fight with the black energy, but as soon as it

did, Xiao Bai's head dropped down to the bed from the lack of power. Its soulforce, previously stronger than Tang Xinyun's soulforce, was now as weak as hers...

“Ungh...” A small groan slipped out of Tang Xinyun's mouth from her pain. It was soft, but to Bai Yunfei's ears, it was as sharp and painful as a blade to his heart.

The situation had taken... a turn for the worse!!

Chapter 267: Powerless

“Xinyun!!”

Bai Yunfei cried out as he rushed to her side. Grabbing her wrist, Bai Yunfei was just about to send in his own soulforce when he realized that it'd only serve to add to her pain. Whipping his head to Xiao Binzi, Bai Yunfei pleaded, “First elder... I beg of you to find a method! You're a Soul King, a mighty Soul King!! Please save Xinyun!!”

Xiao Binzi's face was ashen. Even though he was a Soul King, he had no power here. For the first time in twenty years, Xiao Binzi really felt powerless when he looked at Bai Yunfei's anxious face. If Xinyun had been a little stronger, she would have been strong enough to handle the pain long enough for someone to send their soulforce into her body to burn away the foreign energy. Then they could treat her wounds, but since Tang Xinyun was only an early-stage Soul Sprite, the enemy energy was far too strong for her body to even withstand. Anything else would only make her wounds worse.

Bai Yunfei turned away from Xiao Binzi to Cang Yu next, “Third elder, Xinyun is your own disciple. Please, save her!”

Pained, Cang Yu turned to look at Xiao Binzi, “Senior,” she sighed, “We've exhausted all our other options... we may as well try to use her essence fireseed and hope that it'll be enough...”

“But that way, Xinyun will...” Bai Yunfei protested.

To force Tang Xinyun back to the Soul Warrior realm would be the same as making her give up training in elemental fire. Even though she could continue to train in the path of elemental wind, Tang Xinyun had traveled a long way to reach the Crafting School to train in the art of crafting and elemental fire.

There was a reason Tang Xinyun desired power, and she had told

Bai Yunfei about it once long ago. Everything she was doing was for the sake of growing strong enough to protect her mother...

That's why it was like a dream come true when she finally joined the Crafting School. Even more fulfilling was her feat at becoming a disciple of the third elder. Thanks to being able to condense her essence fireseed, she was able to craft her own soulbound armament and learn the art of crafting.

To use up her essence fireseed today would destroy all the hope she had built up at this point! Her crisis might pass if her essence fireseed was used up, but she would never be able to train with elemental fire even after she fully healed!

Bai Yunfei didn't even want to imagine how he'd be able to face Tang Xinyun when the time came...

"We've no choice," Cang Yu shook her head, "Protecting her life comes first. Even if we must use her essence fireseed, Xinyun will still have the opportunity to pursue another element..."

"But... but..." Lost, Bai Yunfei tried his best to wrack his brain for an idea before swiftly coming to a suggestion, "Oh! We've Xiao Bai! Xiao Bai is Xinyun's soulbeast partner! If we give Xiao Bai soulforce, Xiao Bai can give Xinyun its soulforce! She can be saved that way!!"

Moving to Xiao Bai's body, Bai Yunfei was just about to transmit his soulforce into Xiao Bai when Xiao Binzi pulled him away.

"Yunfei, it's useless. If it was possible, we'd have done so already... Xiao Bai is a soulbeast partner with Xinyun, so their soulforce is indistinguishable from one another. Our soulforce through Xiao Bai would be rejected nonetheless."

"What!" Nearly as fast as his hope lit up, Bai Yunfei found himself plummeting back down into despair. "Then what do we do? What should we do—

"—oh! I've got it! The wind spirit mushroom!" In his moment of

desperation, yet another suggestion came to mind. “Xiao Bai can eat this wind spirit mushroom! It can eat it for soulforce, I’ve a wind spirit mushroom right here!”

Like a drowning man grasping at a low-drooping tree branch to save his life, Bai Yunfei pulled the wind spirit mushroom from his space ring and presented it to Xiao Bai. “Xiao Bai! Eat it! This’ll help you recover your soulforce and get better!”

“Chirp...”

Though the reply was weak, Xiao Bai was clearly able to understand Bai Yunfei. Opening its beak, the bird quickly swallowed the mushroom.

This wind spirit mushroom was nearly a thousand years old. The previous headmaster Zi Jin might have said that this one was only ‘slightly rare,’ but that was still the evaluation of a late-stage Soul King. If a fifth-tier flying scorpion was safeguarding it, the effects of the mushroom would surely be abnormal. After Xiao Bai ate it, its entire body began to glow bright with a green light in what was clearly a sign of it becoming stronger. With renewed soulforce, Xiao Bai began to transmit it into Xinyun’s body in large enough droves, clearly helping Tang Xinyun...

Hopeful, Bai Yunfei continued to stare intently at Tang Xinyun as if to watch her progress. On the other side, Xiao Binzi sighed to himself and shook his head. He looked as if he wanted to say something, but he stopped himself as if he couldn’t bring himself to actually say it.

Several minutes later, Bai Yunfei’s hopeful expression was dashed once more when he noticed the soulforce Xiao Bai gained from the wind spirit mushroom started to die down. In just a short few minutes, it was completely gone from Xiao Bai’s body, and Tang Xinyun was barely better than before.

Then her injuries started to worsen.

That was when Bai Yunfei realized that this method was for naught as well...

A feeling of dread and powerlessness far more potent than before crept into Bai Yunfei's mind and sapped his strength. He staggered away from her bed far enough that Song Lin had to catch him. Song Lin then brought him over to sit on a nearby stool for him to look at Xinyun in despair.

"Sigh..." Cang Yu looked at Bai Yunfei with a pitiful gaze. "Senior, should we use her essence fireseed then?"

Xiao Binzi nodded as he stepped toward her bed.

Right now, that was the only method left...

"Nothing can be done. I can't do anything..." Bai Yunfei muttered to himself despondently as if trying to apologize to Xinyun. The more he muttered, the more his face scrunched together in anguish and his eyes grew even more frantic. "I'm useless, just useless!!!!"

"Aaaahhh!!!!"

"Bang!!"

A crack echoed through the room as the exquisite purplewood table exploded into powder. Bai Yunfei's fist had slammed into it before he ran out the room.

"Yunfei!"

Song Lin yelped before chasing after him.

"Song Lin, don't bother..." Cang Yu stopped him, "It's no use. Yunfei is very emotional right now, leave him alone to calm down for now..."

.....

Outside the room, Bai Yunfei tore through the small courtyard like a berserk bull straight for the halls of the Xiao. In no time at all, he came crashing into Xiao Er.

As soon as Xiao Er saw Bai Yunfei, he paused slightly in surprise, “Brother Bai?” He said, “What brings you here? Actually, good timing, I was just ab—”

“Bang!”

He hadn’t even finished speaking before Bai Yunfei slammed into Xiao Er. Grabbing at his clothes, Bai Yunfei threw him into the nearby rock garden.

Flying into a rock with so much force that Xiao Er’s body cracked it, he let out a hacking cough as a mouthful of blood escaped his mouth.

“Br—brother Bai, what, what do you mean by this!?” Since he was far weaker than Bai Yunfei, Xiao Er was in no position to properly defend himself. Even now, he wasn’t quite sure what in the world Bai Yunfei was doing, so he didn’t know how to respond to this.

The veins in Bai Yunfei’s right arm were bulging as he lifted Xiao Er into the air.

Both of his eyes were practically glowing with a bright red light as he snarled, “Accessories! Give me the accessories! Right now!!”

Chapter 268: Upgrading Craze

“U—ugh!” With his breath knocked out of him, Xiao Er’s face grew red. He tried to regain his breath, “Brother Bai! Calm down! I’ll give you the accessories! Here, have them!!”

His hand pulled out a black space ring from within his robes before handing it to Bai Yunfei to see.

With the ring in sight, Bai Yunfei’s hold on Xiao Er loosened enough for him to fall back to the ground with a gasp. Grabbing the space ring, Bai Yunfei looked inside the ring and could see over two thousand accessories in there.

“Co-cough, Brother Bai, what are you doing!? What’s going on?” Now that Bai Yunfei was finally calm, Xiao Er immediately demanded an explanation.

“...” Snapping back to reality, the craze that was in Bai Yunfei’s eyes bled away as he looked at the panicked Xiao Er.

“Bro—brother Xiao, I... I apologize... I was...” An apology was stammered out.

Now that Bai Yunfei was finally back to normal, Xiao Er chose then to breathe a sigh of relief. “No need for apologies, brother Bai. I know you didn’t mean it, but you were truly frightful just then, what happened?”

Even though Xiao Er didn’t seem to mind, Bai Yunfei’s face was still extremely pale. His lips twitched into a frown as if he was pained and ashamed for what had just happened, “Brother Xiao. I truly apologize, I lost myself for a second there. Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, just a scratch really. It’ll be healed after a good night’s rest.” Xiao Er was a very sanguine person, so a trivial matter like this didn’t weigh too much on his mind.

Bai Yunfei decided not to push the matters anymore. Looking down at the space ring, he thought for a moment before taking out

a silvery-white dagger to give to Xiao Er.

Again, Xiao Er was surprised. Was Bai Yunfei the type of person who liked to give people gifts? Why was he giving him yet another powerful soul armament?

It was an honest apology. “Brother Xiao, I’ve an extremely important matter to take care of right now and can’t say much. I truly apologize for hurting you just now, so please take this soul armament as an apology. I might ask you to buy even more accessories in a little bit. The more the better! The faster the better!”

Xiao Er didn’t plan to take the soul armament, but Bai Yunfei had practically forced the soul armament into his hands, “Brother Xiao, please!!”

Xiao Er didn’t feel like guessing what Bai Yunfei needed these accessories for, but this time he could at least tell that Bai Yunfei really cared about this matter.

If a friend asked for a favor, one should do what one can to help.

Plus, his own grandfather kept repeating the necessity that he should help Bai Yunfei and his group with whatever they needed. Since he was given a second soul armament as a ‘gift,’ the necessity doubled for him. He needed to ensure that he did his best to help Bai Yunfei.

Putting away the dagger, Xiao Er nodded his head with a solemn expression. “Rest assured, brother Bai.” He vowed, “I’ll prepare every single last accessory in Curopia City if I must!”

“Thank you very much, brother Xiao.” Bai Yunfei cupped his hands together, “I must return first. Please prepare the accessories and send them when ready...”

“Not a problem!” Xiao Er nodded.

.....

By the time Bai Yunfei returned, Tang Xinyun's essence fireseed was no more. Her body was devoid of elemental fire, and she was now a Soul Warrior once more.

Her wounds had, for the most part, stabilized. Even the corrosive energy inside had been stopped and was dormant. It remained to be seen whether or not another outbreak would occur... if there was, there'd be no second usage of her essence fireseed...

Wordlessly, Bai Yunfei stared at Tang Xinyun for a few dozen minutes. Then under the worried eyes of the others, he returned to his room and closed himself off.

Getting on top of his bed, Bai Yunfei turned to look in the direction of Tang Xinyun's room. Though he was unable to look through the walls to see the pained body of Tang Xinyun, his own eyes ached with a tint of tenderness. "Xinyun, I won't let you get hurt next time! I'll make sure that I'll make an equipment to help recover your soulforce!"

He shut his eyes and began to take in deep breaths to calm himself. By the time he opened them, Bai Yunfei had a staunch look of determination. Pulling a jade ring into his hands, he thought, "Upgrade!"

.....

Upgrading... upgrading... and upgrading...

Bai Yunfei had been thrown into a near fanatical craze to upgrade things. Practically everything else in the world was forgotten. The only thing he could think about and focus on was upgrading all the accessories here.

The first time, it took Bai Yunfei an entire night to find over a hundred spirit increasing accessories from the thousand accessories he had first been given. Upgrading them until the item broke or gained an effect was another step to the process that added to his time, but this time, the two thousand accessories only

took him half a day to upgrade! That was because during that first night, his soulforce hadn't fully recovered yet!!

Later that afternoon, Xiao Er sent some of his people over to Bai Yunfei for third delivery of accessories. Upon opening the door, the maid that came to attend to Bai Yunfei had nearly cried out in terror!

His eyes were bloodshot, his teeth were gnashed together, and his face was practically without color. If the maid had come during the night rather than the day, she would've thought that Bai Yunfei was some sort of hellish demon rather than a human.

After finishing the second round of accessories, Bai Yunfei ended with thirteen accessories that were +10, but sadly, none of them had the effect he wanted.

Ever since Bai Yunfei had obtained the Equipment Upgrade Technique, the amount of accessories he had upgraded was innumerable. Aside from that first space ring with the soulforce recovery effect, a second one had not appeared even half a year later. From that, it was easy to tell that the chances of it appearing in the first place were very low. It was possible that even after a day dedicated to upgrading, it would not appear.

Whenever he upgraded, Bai Yunfei would stop for a break to let his soulforce recover before throwing himself back into it. Even with the breaks, upgrading so crazily like this was a giant burden on his mind. By the time he reached the third batch of accessories, he was no longer able to resist his fatigue and fell unconscious.

Under his meticulous efforts, Bai Yunfei was able to forcefully rouse himself from his sleep two hours later to continue upgrading.

Use up soulforce, fall asleep, wake up, and continue upgrading. That was how the cycle progressed without fail...

Bai Yunfei had done this once before when he had become a Soul

Sprite. Though by doing this he was able to make a great leap in strength, the strain had been so severe that he nearly lost his life, so he had forbidden himself from repeating the process.

Even though he forbade himself from doing it, the promise he made today to Tang Xinyun trumped that. It didn't matter what the consequences were...

The last time was for the sake of power.

This time was for the sake of saving the life of Xinyun.

The fourth batch of accessories came the following morning. Receiving them with a few words of thanks, Bai Yunfei returned to his room to continue upgrading.

What Bai Yunfei didn't know was that by asking for so many accessories, all of the accessory stores in Curopia City were practically exploding with discussion. This by extension made the house of Xiao a topic of discussion again.

Of course, they were the central topic for the commoners too. Seeing one of the young heirs of the Xiao buy out all the accessories in the city was definitely a first for them.

By the third day, Bai Yunfei had all but locked the doors to his room. The only times he went out were to see Tang Xinyun at night and keep watch for half an hour, and each time, Cang Yu could only sigh and leave the room so that Bai Yunfei could stand by Xinyun's bed. Tang Xinyun had a melancholic expression on her face; though beautiful by physical standards, her face was also sad to see.

Bai Yunfei never moved an inch whenever he looked at her. He never said a word either. After spending half an hour in such a manner, he'd return to his own room and continue to upgrade...

It went without saying that Cang Yu and the others were extremely concerned by Bai Yunfei's behavior, but what could they do? They all thought that he was feeling extremely guilty, but none

of them knew what Bai Yunfei was up to in his craze.

By the fourth day, Bai Yunfei didn't even know how many accessories he had seen or upgraded. He couldn't even give an estimate on the amount of +10 ones he had other than the fact that he had over a hundred of them!

He had despaired over the fact that many of the +10 accessories that granted additional spirit had normal effects such as 'grant additional spirit.' Not a single one of them had an effect of granting additional recovery rates!

By the fifth day, Bai Yunfei's nerves were at a breaking point. With each passing day, the chances of the corrosive energy in Tang Xinyun's body having a second outbreak increased.

He hadn't even had a bite to eat since yesterday so that he could spend his time upgrading the accessories.

Later that afternoon when Bai Yunfei woke up from another one of his fainting spells, he decided not to upgrade any new accessories anymore.

He had to... upgrade the +10 ones!

If the +10 additional effects didn't work, he'd aim for the +12 ones!!

Chapter 269: All or Nothing

Over the span of the past few days of upgrading, Bai Yunfei had upgraded roughly one hundred fifty-six accessories to +10 and had three accessories that were +11. This included the accessories he had before this.

Just how many one of these one hundred fifty-nine accessories would make it to +12, Bai Yunfei didn't know, but that didn't matter. Even if they all failed, Bai Yunfei could start from scratch, and if they worked, there'd be a chance of getting the effects he wanted. The +12 effects were usually a lot stronger than the +10 ones, so the chances of something that could help Tang Xinyun would be a lot higher too...

There was a dark-green bracelet in Bai Yunfei's hands as he looked at the stats.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Elemental Affinity: None

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +33 Spirit

+10 Additional Effect: Increase spirit by 20.

Upgrade Requirement: 22 Soulpoints

After looking at the stats, Bai Yunfei thought, "Upgrade."

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

That was an expected outcome...

He took another equipment. “Upgrade.”

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

“Upgrade...”

Upgrade Failed

.....

The chances of a successful upgrade after reaching the +10 mark were so low that anyone would feel frustrated. Out of the twenty-six accessories Bai Yunfei tried, he was ‘fortunate’ that one of them passed.

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High
Elemental Affinity: None
Upgrade Level: +11
Additional Attribute: +86 Spirit
Soul Compatibility: 15%

+10 Additional Effect: Increase spirit by 55.
Upgrade Requirement: 4 Soulpoints

Sighing as he looked at the amber necklace, Bai Yunfei thought, “Finally got one. Getting any piece of equipment to +11 is probably below 10%....that doesn’t matter, I have to keep upgrading!”

He picked up a black ring next, “Upgrade!”

.....

This time, Bai Yunfei was a little more careful as he upgraded the accessories. There weren’t even two hundred accessories this time, but it took three hours for him to finish. Now that night was here and all the +10 equipment were upgraded, Bai Yunfei was left with only... sixteen!

With barely even a ten percent success rate, Bai Yunfei felt quite fortunate to have what he had. Counting the three accessories he had from before, he now had nineteen +11 accessories.

Cross-legged on his bed, Bai Yunfei looked over each of the nineteen accessories. This was the first time in five days that he had been so calm. Grabbing a jade bracelet with his hand, he muttered, “After five days of work, this is what I have. Whether I make it or break it, these nineteen items will determine my fate!”

“Upgrade!!”

Upgrade Failed
Equipment Destroyed

“.....”

Disappoint flashed over the frozen face of Bai Yunfei before he shook his head, “That’s only the first one. I’ve still more to go!”

“Upgrade!”

Upgrade Failed
Equipment Destroyed

“Upgrade!”

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

“.....”

Bai Yunfei’s lips twitched sporadically with an unsightly expression. Picking up a purplish-red bracelet next, Bai Yunfei let out a heavy breath to calm himself. “Upgrade.”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High
Elemental Affinity: None
Upgrade Level: +12
Additional Attribute: +122 Spirit
Soul Compatibility: 25%

+10 Additional Effect: Increase spirit by 53.
+12 Additional Effect: Increase spirit by 100.

Upgrade Requirement: 60 Soulpoints

“Success!!” Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up with joy, but when he saw the new effect of the bracelet, a look of disgust immediately replaced it.

“Yo—this—what the fuck! What else can you do but increase spirit!? I want the ability to regenerate soulforce! Regenerate!!” Bai Yunfei howled as he looked at the +12 equipment he had worked so

hard to upgrade.

The accessory was quite something else in truth. It granted an additional 275 points of spirit—by no means a small number, roughly 550 units of soulforce!

To be more definite, an early-stage Soul Personage had 600 units of soulforce. A late-stage Soul Personage had roughly 1000.

So that meant if an early-stage Soul Personage were to wear this ring, they’d have enough soulforce to fight a late-stage Soul Personage!

To be fair, having soulforce did not mean having strength, but in a long fight, the one with even more soulforce between two at the same level of strength would come out on top. For Bai Yunfei, equipping this ring would give him a substantial boost to his soulforce.

But this wasn’t what he wanted!!

It took so much time and effort for him to get a +12 equipment. To have this effect appear right now was nothing more than an irksome presence that he hated!

After several deep breaths to quell his disappointment, Bai Yunfei tossed the +12 bracelet aside and took out another ring. “Upgrade.”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High

Elemental Affinity: None

Upgrade Level: +12

Additional Attribute: +130 Spirit

Soul Compatibility: 25%

+10 Additional Effect: When in use, decrease the consumption of soulforce by 5%.

+12 Additional Effect: Decrease the attack of all spirit-based attacks by 15%.

“This...” Bai Yunfei was speechless at what he had achieved, “I succeeded again!!”

Like he said before, upgrading was something Bai Yunfei had no guarantees. He couldn’t guarantee a chance of success out of ten equipment, but he couldn’t say that it’d be possible to have a consecutive success—just like right now.

But it still wasn’t what he wanted!!

He succeeded in upgrading, but he was disappointed with the results nonetheless. “There’s still a chance!” Bai Yunfei encouraged himself, “I’ve two successes out of five. That means I could still have a chance!”

He pulled out a necklace with his hand, “Upgrade!”

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

.....

Perhaps the goddess of fortune was looking after Bai Yunfei for only that moment, for Bai Yunfei failed the following ten one after another!

From the remaining +11 equipment after that, only one more succeeded!

Equipment Grade: High
Elemental Affinity: None
Upgrade Level: +12
Additional Attribute: +125 Spirit

Soul Compatibility: 25%

+10 Additional Effect: Increase spirit by 60.

+12 Additional Effect: There is a 5% chance of being immune to a spirit-based attack when hit.

Cooldown of 1 hour.

Upgrade Requirement: 60 Soulpoints

This was the third +12 accessory.

Bai Yunfei looked at it despondently. After five straight days of upgrading, this was all that he was left with...

“Just how could this be...” Bai Yunfei muttered to himself in despair. “There were so many accessories, so many! Why wasn’t there a single one with that effect!?”

He raised his head to look up at the heavens beyond the roof, “Dear Heavens, are you trying to make me regret this for the rest of my life...?”

For several minutes, Bai Yunfei looked at the three accessories in his hand. As if to comfort himself, he muttered, “+13... equipment still have another additional effect. That’s my last chance... I managed to upgrade the brick to +13 before, so it’s not impossible! I can’t give up, I have to stay determined... there’s still hope!!”

Trying to instill hope in himself, Bai Yunfei grabbed the nearby purple-red bracelet. “Upgrade...”

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

Perhaps the Heavens didn't listen to his prayer since the bracelet was immediately reduced to ashes.

Bai Yunfei's pupils dilated a bit as his face drained of color. Trying to maintain his calm and determination, Bai Yunfei shook his hand to take out a white stone.

This time, he'll use the upgrade stone!!

Chapter 270: Yun's Soul Ring

Bai Yunfei didn't really know the best way to 'use' the upgrade stone, but if he had to guess, it'd have to be used at some point when he upgraded an item. The stone increased the chance of success when upgrading, so if he held the +12 ring and the stone together in one hand, he should be able to 'use the stone' if he thought hard about it.

As expected, a strange connection between him and the stone was created. Almost as if linking with his thoughts, the effect of the stone could be felt.

After confirming the stats of the ring, Bai Yunfei thought, "Upgrade!"

As per usual when upgrading, a strand of his soulforce was taken from him. The only difference this time was that the notification on the results didn't immediately show up. Bai Yunfei could just barely sense that there was some sort of strange energy materializing in front of him, and in a split-second, the stone in his hand was immediately reduced to a small pile of white powder that flew into the ring in his hand!

Unconsciously, Bai Yunfei began to use his soulsense.

Usage of item to enhance upgrade successful, chance of upgrading increased by 100%...

A never-before-seen notification popped up in Bai Yunfei's head. When he used his soulsense to 'look' inside, he could see that the white powder, which used to be the upgrade stone, was being absorbed by the +12 ring.

Even more strange was the fact that his soulsense was being pulled in with this white energy!!

Hidden in there, Bai Yunfei could see a small ‘spot.’ In this spot was some sort of slow moving law of the world that came to a complete stop...

Upgrade Successful

A notification flashed in Bai Yunfei’s mind, causing him to snap to attention. The strange feeling from before was gone now.

“What was that...” Bai Yunfei shook his head to clear his mind, “It... it actually worked!”

Whether it was the doubled success rate from the upgrade stone, the Heavens had listened to him, or it was because of the fact that he was the main character, he had... succeeded!

Impatiently grabbing the ring, Bai Yunfei looked at the stats with an extremely anxious look.

Equipment Grade: High
Elemental Affinity: None
Upgrade Level: +13
Additional Attribute: +189 Spirit
Soul Compatibility: 40%

+10 Additional Effect: Increase spirit by 60.
+12 Additional Effect: 3% chance of avoiding a spirit-based attack.
+13 Additional Effect: Recover 3 soulpoints every second.

Upgrade Requirement: 66 Soulpoints

When the notification for the stats appeared in his mind, Bai Yunfei was speechless for a second before his body began to shiver.

“It... it finally appeared!!”

He couldn't help but scream this over and over in his mind, he could even feel tears start to well up in his eyes.

After trying so hard and experiencing despair so many times, he had finally gotten the effect he wanted!!

And this effect was... a lot stronger than what he expected!

Not only did it accelerate the regeneration of soulforce, it returned some every second!

What did that mean, though? Increasing the rate of recovery was dependent on how fast the person could regenerate their soulforce, but this effect was not dependent on that, it simply recovered soulforce at a steady rate!

Three soulpoints per second meant... thirty soulpoints in ten seconds. In one minute that was 180 soulpoints, and in ten minutes, that was 1800 soulpoints!!

Bai Yunfei was an early-stage Soul Ancestor, meaning he had less than six thousand units of soulpoints. Even if he used up all his soulforce, as long as he put on this ring, he'd be back to almost full capacity by thirty minutes!!

In his hands, the small milky-white ring looked like a piece of ivory. Adorned on top of the ring was a very common-looking crystal with engravings that blended in with the ring around it. With its remarkable craftsmanship, the ring looked a bit like a cloud.

“Xinyun... Xinyun has a chance now!!”

His heart skipped a beat at the realization. As though unwilling to hesitate or bother with the remaining +12 ring with him, Bai Yunfei immediately flew from his bed and out of his room.

.....

From within Tang Xinyun's room, Cang Yu smiled as Bai Yunfei came running in. “Yunfei, you're here.” She warmly smiled.

In all honesty, Cang Yu had been unhappy with Bai Yunfei because of his reckless actions. Actions that had reduced Tang Xinyun to this state, but the past few days had altered her judgement. She could see that Bai Yunfei blamed himself each time he came in to see her. He blamed himself so much that he would ‘shut’ himself in his own room as if for penance.

With those actions, it was hard for her to continue blaming Bai Yunfei, so all that she could do was sigh and hope that this lesson would be enough for Bai Yunfei to learn the folly of his ways.

Bai Yunfei bowed to Cang Yu, “Third elder, how is Xinyun today?”

“She hasn’t improved yet,” Cang Yu shook her head regretfully, “we aren’t sure when that corrosive energy will start to spike again either. The first elder and I have decided that we will return to the Crafting School tomorrow with Xinyun. Hopefully senior Zi Jin will know of something.”

“We’ll be heading back just like that?” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows knit together, “But... didn’t the first elder say that it’s best not to move Xinyun?”

“We’ve no choice. To continue and stay here would be useless. It would be better to risk the journey home and seek treatment there.” Cang Yu shook her head.

“...” Bai Yunfei was silent for a moment, “Third elder... may... may I be alone with Xinyun for a moment?”

“Very well,” She nodded and smiled, “I was getting tired, so I’ll be returning to rest first. I’ll leave Xinyun with you for now.”

After Cang Yu left, Bai Yunfei took a seat next to Tang Xinyun’s bed and looked at the still sleeping girl. Her pained expression served as a source of pain to Bai Yunfei himself.

Without time to waste, Bai Yunfei took Tang Xinyun’s left hand and slipped the +13 ring onto her left ring finger.

As he placed her icy-cold arm back on the bed, Bai Yunfei murmured softly to her, “Xinyun, don’t worry. You’ll be fine. I’ll call this ring ‘Yun’s Soul Ring.’ A ring that was made because of you. It’ll help you fight the corrosive energy...”

Maybe it was because of Bai Yunfei’s comforting words—though most likely because of the Yun’s Soul Ring—but Tang Xinyun’s eyebrows seemed to unfurl just slightly.

But it wasn’t a big enough change to be noticed.

“Eh? What’s going on?” Bai Yunfei was surprised. He had expected to see the +13 ring have some sort of effect by now. As a late-stage Soul Warrior, it’d take less than ten minutes for Tang Xinyun to fully recover her soulforce. However, it had been a whole minute since he had put the ring on, yet Tang Xinyun hadn’t reacted in the slightest.

Tang Xinyun’s rate of soulforce regeneration was roughly the same as the rate the corrosive energy was moving, so with the ring giving her 3 soulpoints per second, there should’ve been an immediate turn for the better already!

“Ngh...” The soft sound of Tang Xinyun’s voice broke Bai Yunfei’s train of thought. Snapping his head down, Bai Yunfei realized that there was a change overcoming Tang Xinyun’s face...

She was looking even more pained than before!

As if breaking out of the hibernation it was in, a wisp of black energy suddenly burst out of her body and into the air above!

Though he knew that it was because of the ring that this happened, Bai Yunfei was still alarmed by what he saw. He was just about to cry out for Cang Yu, but before he could even open his mouth, the door to Tang Xinyun’s room burst open. Both Xiao Binzi and Cang Yu flew into the room and landed right beside Bai Yunfei; due to their relative strength, even the slightest of fluctuations of energy could be felt, especially since they were

already paying close attention to the source.

“Yunfei, what happened?!” Panicking, Cang Yu questioned Bai Yunfei and began to look over Tang Xinyun.

There was no way that Bai Yunfei would say that the reason why this had happened was because of the upgraded ring he had put on Tang Xinyun, but even knowing that he was extremely worried and replied to her without delay, “I... I don’t know either. It just happened out of nowhere, is the corrosive energy having another outbreak!? First elder, third elder, please take a look! Is... is Xinyun alright?”

Xiao Binzi had already been looking at Tang Xinyun before Bai Yunfei had even asked him too. “Hm?” He uttered, “The... corrosive energy has gotten weaker? No, that’s not right. Xinyun’s soulforce is recovering far faster than before! But how?”

“It really is! Xinyun’s soulforce recovery is triumphing the corrosive energy! What a relief! Xinyun can be saved!”

As if a heavy weight had been lifted off his shoulders, Bai Yunfei let loose a sigh of relief. He continued to look at Tang Xinyun’s face with both of his hands clenched tight enough for sweat to start to pool inside.

Roughly half an hour later, the black aura that was around Tang Xinyun’s face finally dissipated before some semblance of color returned to it.

“Unhh...” There was a slight groan from Tang Xinyun’s mouth and a tremble from her eyelashes before her eyes slowly fluttered open.

Tang Xinyun was finally awake!!

Chapter 271: Avoiding Danger

Tang Xinyun's eyes were a bit glossy from her sudden awakening. For a few seconds, she remained in her bed and blinked her eyes before finally registering Cang Yu next to her. Her mouth opened slightly as if she wanted to say something, but no sound came out.

“Xinyun, don't speak for now. Focus on regaining your soulforce.” Cang Yu's hand clutched at Tang Xinyun's as she softly instructed.

Tang Xinyun blinked once. She seemed to be responding to Cang Yu, but her eyes then shifted away from Cang Yu to look at Bai Yunfei who was beside himself with worry.

A flash of joy registered in her eyes and her lips seemed to curl up, the sign of a smile. She was overjoyed to see that Bai Yunfei was safe and sound.

It was a small detail that Bai Yunfei would never be able to forget...

Yet, at the same time, Bai Yunfei felt even more regret.

“Xi—Xinyun, listen to the third elder and rest up. You'll be fine...” His voice trailed off as if unsure of what to say other than some comforting words. Even those words were said with a stutter before he turned to Xiao Binzi, “First elder, Xinyun is going to be fine, isn't she? How long will it take for her to fully recover?”

Deep in thought as he pondered the question, Xiao Binzi then answered, “Xinyun's current situation is way better than before. I estimate that she won't face any other dangers but... a full recovery won't be easy.”

“Even now there's still not a chance for full recovery!?” Bai Yunfei cried out in despair.

Xiao Binzi nodded, “The corrosiveness from the Soul Refining

Palm isn't easy to neutralize. The fact that Xinyun was able to wake up is a blessing in itself. Perhaps the Purple Spirit Ring was far more effective than I thought...

“But in short, as long as Xinyun's soulforce continues to regenerate, she should be able to subdue and neutralize the remaining corrosive energy. Bit by bit, there'll surely be a day when all of that energy will be neutralized.”

“How... how long will that take?” Bai Yunfei asked.

Xiao Binzi wasn't sure, “I cannot say. A few days perhaps. A few months, even longer... There is no saying when or if the corrosive energy will come back. That's why I cannot guarantee anything.”

Bai Yunfei was quiet. He had originally thought that Tang Xinyun would be safe and sound with the Yun's Soul Ring. The fact that there'd still be so many different problems was surprising to him. In any case, Tang Xinyun was up now and was in no immediate danger. This much was enough to shrug off most of the weight on his shoulders.

.....

Tang Xinyun was awake for only a short moment. She soon closed her eyes once again. She hadn't fainted. She was instead asleep due to her fatigue.

Leaving Cang Yu behind to look after the sleeping female, Bai Yunfei and Xiao Binzi both walked out of the room and into the courtyard. The problem was resolved, but the worry in Bai Yunfei's heart wasn't gone yet. He looked back at her room.

It was evident to Xiao Binzi what Bai Yunfei was feeling. “Yunfei, don't worry.” He comforted, “Concerning yourself over her won't do any good right now. Xinyun is already getting better, it's just a long route of recuperation from here.

“Just don't blame yourself too much. Making a mistake is something everyone does. To linger on these mistakes is not what

a man should do.”

Bai Yunfei was confused at first as to what Xiao Binzi was saying, but then he realized that the elder had mistaken Bai Yunfei’s room confinement as a sign of self-blame. He didn’t want to mention that even though Tang Xinyun had escaped danger, he was still feeling some lingering regret.

Bai Yunfei didn’t plan on halting his plans to upgrade the spirit-increasing accessories. In fact, he wanted to make even more, to help Tang Xinyun drive out the remaining corrosive energy. That would be when he would stop feeling regretful.

“First elder...” Bai Yunfei began, “I was actually in my room because I realized that something wasn’t right with myself...”

“What!?” Xiao Binzi started. His hand flew to grab Bai Yunfei’s shoulder and probed in with his soulsense. “Your aura is a little peculiar and garbled. What happened? Why didn’t you tell me earlier?”

“With the condition Xinyun was in, I didn’t want to let you worry even more, first elder. I didn’t know what was wrong either. I was just afraid that something would happen if I didn’t try to control the situation. If that happened, I’d hope that you’d come to save me, first elder...”

Overusing the Upgrade Technique wasn’t something to take lightly. The first time this had happened, Bai Yunfei had nearly lost his life. It was after that rampant usage that Bai Yunfei calmed himself down and forbade himself to do it again, but for Tang Xinyun’s sake, he had no other choice.

With Xiao Binzi being a Soul King, Bai Yunfei had to make up an excuse so that he’d be prepared in the future.

Still looking at Bai Yunfei with narrowed eyes, Xiao Binzi didn’t look as if he knew what was going on with Bai Yunfei, so he said, “Very well. Now that Xinyun is fine, we won’t need to hurry back

to the Crafting School. We'll stay here for a bit longer. Should anything happen, come straight to me at once."

"Yes, elder. My apologies for the trouble..." Bai Yunfei nodded.

"Sigh... you youngsters and your reckless actions and inconsideration for the feelings of others. When will you grow up and let us old ones be worry free?" Xiao Binzi sighed before walking back to his room. At the moment, he looked as if he really was a kind but ordinary old man. He might be grumbling about Bai Yunfei's actions, but Bai Yunfei still felt slightly warm inside.

When Bai Yunfei returned to his own courtyard, he managed to come across one of the men from the Xiao. The man had yet another space ring filled with accessories for Bai Yunfei. He took it without another word.

Back in his room, Bai Yunfei was free to upgrade as he liked. This time, the process was far more casual than before. When he used up all his soulforce, Bai Yunfei didn't try to force himself to continue.

Instead, he took a proper 'rest' for the first time in days.

.....

Later that night within the Xiao Compound—

The head of the family, Xiao Rang, sat in the middlemost seat with a grim expression. His son, Xiao Xin sat to his right with an equally uneasy expression.

In the center of the room in front of the two stood a figure with his head drooped down low. It was the grandson of Xiao Rang, Xiao Er.

Eying Xiao Er with eyes that could start a fire, Xiao Rang exploded in anger, "Well? What do you have to say for yourself? In five days, you've borrowed enough money for ten years from our account books, and you even borrowed an enormous sum from your brother and sisters! Then, you spent all this money to buy

every single jewelry store in Curopia City and even some of the other stores in the surrounding cities! What ridiculousness is this? You better have a good reason for this; no matter how much your grandmother might protect you, I'll snap your leg if you don't explain yourself!!”

Since he and Xiao Xin were completely busy taking care of the matters relating to the destruction of the house of Sun, the two of them had left the internal matters alone unless it was of immediate importance. The destruction of the Sun was very convenient to their family to say the least. Any subordinate family to the Sun needed to be subjugated, and their businesses needed to be bought out.

So upon their return to the household, the two of them were swarmed with complaints from every single female in the Xiao. Each one of them complained that Xiao Er had rudely appropriated their jewelry and accessories without their permission. This in turn led to Xiao Rang and Xiao Xin's immediate anger. They demanded Xiao Rang be summoned for punishment

Xiao Rang was a figure within the household everyone was afraid of, Xiao Er was no exception, but even though he was accustomed to the critics of his grandfather, Xiao Er had a perfectly reasonable justification for his actions this time. Straightening his back, Xiao Er announced, “Grandfather, your grandson has a good reason for this!”

“Oh?” Xiao Rang replied in surprise. “What reason do you have? Speak!” He questioned.

“These accessories were... what brother Bai wanted me to buy.” Xiao Er confessed.

“Bai Yunfei?” Xiao Rang and Xiao Xin echoed. “Wasn't he heavily injured? What does he want with these accessories?” Xiao Xin asked.

Since he didn't know, Xiao Er shook his head. “I... don't know

why, but he didn't want all of them. Each time I gave him a good sum, but he'd return roughly ninety percent of them before asking me for another delivery. I didn't understand why, but grandfather said that I should do whatever the guests from the Crafting School wanted. So, I..."

Bai Yunfei had only wanted the accessories that granted spirit. Any +1 accessories that granted any other attribute was pointless to keep and upgrade so he returned them to Xiao Er.

"That is a strange request... does Bai Yunfei have some sort of strange hobby?" Xiao Xin conjectured, but he wasn't content with that, "Was this Bai Yunfei really such an intemperate person? He might be an honored guest, but to have our family pay so much is a bit..."

Xiao Er interrupted his father before he could finish speaking, "Father, brother Bai didn't have me help him without a payment. He gave me two soul armaments as gifts..."

"Oh? Soul armaments?" As soon as they heard the words 'soul armaments,' Xiao Rang and Xiao Xin were surprised. "What tier are they? Low-human or mid-human? Let us see."

"Okay..." Xiao Er took out the silver dagger from his space ring and handed it to Xiao Rang.

Upon handling the dagger, Xiao Er examined it before nearly dropping it in shock, "High-human tier!"

"What!? A high-human tier soul armament!?" Xiao Xin was shocked too. "Th—this Bai Yunfei is... a very generous person..."

A soul armament of that tier was worth far more than what the Xiao had lost in the past five days.

"One moment. You said there were two? What is the second one? Show me!" Xiao Rang's tone was suddenly a lot more impatient than before.

Xiao Er himself was excited too. He didn't know how to

differentiate between soul armaments. He only knew that the one he had obtained was a human tier soul armament, not that it was a high-human tier one.

In his age-group, the only ones who had a high-human tier soul armament was his older brother, so hearing Xiao Rang declare the tier of it was enough for his heart to skip a beat. Quelling his emotions, Xiao Er took out the other azure longsword and handed it to Xiao Rang.

Taking the longsword, Xiao Rang pushed his soulforce into the sword and listened for the vibrations. As soon as the sword light up in a flash of azure light, Xiao Rang's eyes lit up too.

“Low-earth!!”

In comparison, a low-earth tier soul armament was far better than a high-human tier soul armament. Ever since the founding of the Xiao, their family heirloom had been nothing more than a high-earth tier soul armament. To have Bai Yunfei ‘gift’ them such an expensive item for a few accessories was something even he, a Soul Exalt, would be overwhelmed by.

A wave of silence descended over the room for a decent amount of time before Xiao Rang finally spoke to Xiao Er. “Report to the accountants and tell them that you are free to use whatever capital you need to buy Bai Yunfei his accessories. You are authorized to use and purchase as much as he needs!!”

Chapter 272: The Weeping of a Woman

After waking up on the second day, Bai Yunfei felt ‘comfortable’ for the first time in a while. His soulforce was back at peak capacity, and his mind was completely refreshed. The only thing that Bai Yunfei felt sad about was that the abundantly warm feeling of elemental fire still couldn’t be felt.

Rather than throw himself back into upgrading, Bai Yunfei left his room to go find Tang Xinyun.

He knocked on the door prior to entering, but as soon as he did, Bai Yunfei realized that Tang Xinyun was already awake and conversing with Cang Yu, who was seated next to her bed.

As soon as she saw Bai Yunfei, Cang Yu greeted him with a smile. Then, as ‘per usual,’ she stood up to walk out of the room, “Have a nice talk with Xinyun, Yunfei. I’ll be going back to rest.”

Bai Yunfei respectfully bowed to her, “Thank you, third elder. Please have a good rest. I’ll look after Xinyun...”

As soon as Cang Yu left, Bai Yunfei sat down on the stool next to Tang Xinyun’s bed. Upon seeing her rosy, beautiful face, Bai Yunfei asked her in concern, “Xinyun, how are you feeling?”

Nodding her head, Tang Xinyun smiled warmly at him, “I feel much better now. Thank you for worrying, Yunfei.”

Bai Yunfei said nothing in return, choosing to stay silent for a few seconds in shame. “Xinyun, I’m...”

“Don’t say sorry.”

Tang Xinyun cut into his words first. “I chose to throw myself in front of you that day out of my own volition. There’s no need for you to apologize...”

Having no idea that Tang Xinyun would respond like that, Bai Yunfei was quiet. “Xinyun...” He started again.

“Don’t say thank you either.” Tang Xinyun interrupted again. “You saved me once before, so it was my turn to save you. Take this as me returning the favor, so don’t say thank you...”

Again, Bai Yunfei said nothing. He continued to stare at Tang Xinyun blankly and in confused silence.

Seemingly embarrassed by how Bai Yunfei was staring at her, she stammered, “Wh—why are you so quiet now?”

“What I want to say, you won’t let me say. I’m waiting for you to tell me what I can say.”

“.....”

Surprised by his response, Tang Xinyun thought earnestly for a moment. Tilting her head as soon as she had thought of something, she smiled, “Then how about you talk about something else...

“Like this... ‘Yun’s Soul Ring’?”

His heart stopped for a second.

“Xinyun, how did you...?”

“How do I know its name?” Xinyun winked an eye with a smile. “I was actually somewhat aware of my surroundings yesterday. I wasn’t fully awake, but I managed to hear a bit of your voice...”

Lifting her left hand up for both to see the ring on her ring finger, she said, “Was it because of this ring that I managed to get better?”

It was one shock after another. He didn’t think that Tang Xinyun would’ve been able to hear what he had said yesterday, but he didn’t think he’d be able to keep the secret from her either.

It was on her finger after all. There was no way she would not notice its effects.

However, Bai Yunfei had already planned an excuse for this situation.

Since Bai Yunfei was being unresponsive, Tang Xinyun smiled, “Don’t worry. I won’t tell master about it... she thinks I woke up because of the Violet Soul Ring.”

Relieved, Bai Yunfei immediately thanked her, “Xinyun, thank you...”

“Why are you thanking me? You saved me, I should be thanking you.”

“Thank you for keeping my secret.” Bai Yunfei confessed.

Shaking her head, Tang Xinyun said, “If you don’t want to let anyone else know, I won’t talk about it. But... Yunfei, where did you get this strange soul armament? The Violet Soul Ring master gave me is one of the most precious rings around and the only soul armament that has the ability to let me recover soulforce, but you have a ring that’s much better than it....”

“A senior once gave me this ring a very long time ago. He said to not let anyone know I had such a ring, so I never told the first elder or anyone else. You were hurt because of me. There was no way I’d let you stay hurt. We were lucky that the ring was useful enough to save you...

“Thank the heavens you woke up, Xinyun. If someone were to happen to you, I’d never be able to forgive myself...” Bai Yunfei gave an ‘explanation.’

“Haha, I’m fine now. You don’t need to blame yourself anymore.” Tang Xinyun gently laughed. “Don’t worry, if you don’t want to let anyone know, then I’ll help you keep this secret. Once I get better, I’ll give the ring back to you...”

“Don’t worry about it,” Bai Yunfei shook his head, “Xinyun... keep the ring. I’ve already named it the Yun’s Soul Ring, so it’s yours now.”

“What?” Xinyun responded. Bai Yunfei giving her such a magical ring to save her was something she could understand, but to have

her keep it? She was astonished... didn't he realize how precious this ring was?

Even someone who didn't understand the world of soul cultivators knew that if this ring were to be exposed, the entire world would massacre itself for the ring.

Bai Yunfei couldn't help but smile when he saw her thunderstruck expression, "Xinyun, I said I'd give it to you, so it's yours. Be careful and don't let anyone know how special it is. There will be trouble if someone finds out."

"But..."

"Don't 'but' me. Xinyun, don't worry about it for now. Just make use of the ring and get better. Once you get rid of the corrosive energy, you'll truly be out of danger."

"Oh..." She replied in a daze, but when she thought about something, her face darkened in color. "Whether I fully recover or not isn't important. I can no longer train in elemental fire..." She sighed.

A stab of pain shot through Bai Yunfei's heart. The most worrisome topic finally came to hand.

The fact that Tang Xinyun's essence fireseed had been used up was the biggest change.

"Xinyun, don't worry. There'll definitely be a way to regain your essence fireseed. If there isn't, you can train in the other elements. Don't feel sad. You're still young, you'll definitely get better!"

"Yunfei, you don't need to comfort me. I already know that..." Xinyun sighed. "Master already told me that I might never be able to use elemental fire again. She advised me to train in another element and said that the headmaster has a daughter in the Water School. She said that I could go join them..."

"But... I don't want to! It took everything I had to join the Crafting School! I have the talent, and my master looked after me

so much! I've seniors who care for me, and there's Xiao Rui too...

"I've only known them all for half a year, but the Crafting School feels like family to me. I don't... I don't want to leave them..."

"I want to train in elemental fire! I want to craft! I want to get stronger! I... I want to protect my mother..."

The more Tang Xinyun spoke, the more she began to sob. She was a strong woman, but the weight of her emotions finally proved too much for her to bear.

For once, she showed Bai Yunfei a vulnerable side to her.

Her tears caused Bai Yunfei to freeze up. This wasn't something he thought would happen.

He wanted to reach a hand up to wipe away her tears, but that didn't seem appropriate.

He wanted to say something to comfort her, but he realized that he had somehow been thrown into a period of mute silence.

When Tang Xinyun's head leaned against his shoulder to cry on, Bai Yunfei went as still as a statue. He didn't dare move even a muscle as he sat there, allowing her to wet his clothes with her tears and listen to her cries.

With each sob, Bai Yunfei's heart ached even more.

After a while, the sounds of Tang Xinyun's sobs grew fainter and fainter before Bai Yunfei finally realized that she had fallen asleep on his shoulder. Her anguish had sapped her of her strength.

Returning the girl back to the bed, Bai Yunfei pulled the covers over her and wiped away the tears on her face. He stood up from his stool and walked out of her room. When he had returned to his room, his eyes were filled with a warm-hearted tenderness.

But that was replaced with a look of determination like never before...

"I'll definitely help you get better, Xinyun. I'll definitely make

sure that you'll be able to regain your essence fireseed!"

"If she can't do it herself, then maybe... the fireseed spirit mushroom can!!"

Chapter 273: A Conclusive but Silent Decision

When Bai Yunfei returned to his room, he didn't continue upgrading. He instead sat down on his bed and rested against the wall. This was the first time in a while that he began to think about the chaotic events as of late.

First was the determination he had when he came out of Tang Xinyun's room...

"Xinyun needs to be able to practice the elemental fire in order to regain her essence fireseed. It's almost impossible, but... if there's the fireseed spirit mushroom, it might just be doable!" Bai Yunfei recalled the memories of when he had used the mushroom. It wasn't a stretch to say that the fireseed spirit mushroom was a materialized form of essence fireseed.

Thinking about how Hong Yin had given him the fireseed spirit mushroom, Bai Yunfei thought, "But the fireseed spirit mushroom isn't something that's easy to find. Master said before that the last sighting of one was a few dozen years ago..."

"He also said that they can only be found in the Soulbeast Forest..."

Fireseed spirit mushrooms were incomparably rare. While they could be found elsewhere, those who understood anything about them knew that the very first place to find them would be in the Soulbeast Forest. That place was a verdant gathering ground for treasures like that.

It also went without saying that it was also the burial grounds for people who came treasure-seeking...

The very thought of the situation caused Bai Yunfei to narrow his eyes and shake his head. "Going to the Soulbeast Forest would be as good as killing myself with my strength! Ugh... if I could talk to

brother Hong Yin and have him help me find one, that'd make things easier..."

Then he remembered the bone fragment Hong Yin had given him a long time ago, "Brother Hong Yin said that this fragment would be enough for the stronger soulbeasts to not attack me. In that case..."

Thinking a little harder, Bai Yunfei sighed, "That still doesn't work... he said that only the soulbeasts who are sentient and can speak the human tongue would be able to recognize the fragment. Those are soulbeasts of the seventh-tier and higher. With my strength, I'd have trouble with fifth-tier soulbeasts. If I went to the Soulbeast Forest now, I'd be unable to take a step in!"

The Bai Yunfei of today wasn't an ignoramus like before. Zi Jin had already told him a few things about the Soulbeast Forest and the soulbeasts inside. There were similarities between soulbeasts and humans, like how there were good people and bad people and how there were all sorts of powerful beings there. This rang true for the soulbeasts who were sentient. In the world of soul cultivators, Hong Yin was regarded as the 'Wolf Child' because he was the adopted son of the Bloodhowl Wolf King. The Bloodhowl Wolf King was one of the nine kings of soulbeasts and was an eighth-tier Soulbeast.

This was equivalent to a late-stage Soul King.

The bone fragment Hong Yin gave him were most likely an item of equivalent value that explained his relationship with the Wolf King. While it had extraordinary uses, it wasn't absolute. There were all sorts of beings in the world of soulbeasts, and not every soulbeast would care about the bone fragment. There was no saying what would happen if Bai Yunfei came across an enemy of the Bloodhowl Wolf King.

After careful consideration, Bai Yunfei finally let out a sigh. "I have the determination, but not the strength!! Even if I was more

determined, it's still nothing but words in the end... without my previous strength, I shouldn't even think about going to the Soulbeast Forest. Xinyun hasn't fully recovered either, I guess I should forget about this for now..."

"Then..." Bai Yunfei's mind shifted to another topic with increasing coldness, even his eyes reflected the chilling anger he was feeling. "The Soul Refining School!! I won't forgive you! Wait until I grow strong enough. If we meet again, you won't face an easy death!!"

His essence fireseed had been injured beyond belief with no guarantee of recovery, and Tang Xinyun had barely avoided death. Her essence fireseed was completely used up and the corrosive energy was still lingering in her. With these two major factors, Bai Yunfei's hatred for the Soul Refining School was etched in his bones.

"The Beast Taming School aren't innocent either. They were with the Soul Refining School..." Bai Yunfei thought to himself. "The Beast Taming School... what secrets do they hide!? I came across them in Jade Willow City, then Gaoyi City, and here. They even destroyed a major family here..."

Just faintly, Bai Yunfei could smell the hint of a sinister plot brewing somewhere.

Bai Yunfei broke into laughter a moment later, "I'm just a small Soul Ancestor," he mocked himself, "What a waste of time thinking about this..."

"More importantly, there's still that matter with the upgrade stone..." Bai Yunfei thought about the moment he had used the upgrade stone on the +12 Yun's Soul Ring. "What a strange situation. It felt similar to that 'Anima Realm' master talked about, but it wasn't the actual Anima Realm... was it because I used the upgrade stone? I don't know what exactly that feeling was or what it meant... but it was extremely important..."

“Too bad that the stone could only be used once. I’d have liked to experiment with it.” Bai Yunfei sighed in disappointment, “If I could get another one, I’d be able to experiment some more.

“There’s still brother Jiang Fan to worry about. Ugh... looks like I won’t be able to bluff my way out of this! Because of the situation, he hasn’t mentioned anything yet, but I can’t keep hiding this forever. What should I say when the time comes?” Bai Yunfei tried his best to think of a solution, but nothing came to mind.

“If I can’t think of anything, I can only tell the ‘truth.’ ...I’ll have to say that an accident happened when I became a Soul Sprite and caused the Fire-tipped Spear to become a soulbound armament. It’s a little far-fetched, but since I have the ‘precedent’ of being able to enter the Anima Realm, I’m sure the master will accept this excuse, right?”

Afterward, Bai Yunfei thought about several other things that happened over the past few days. “Let’s start upgrading then! I have to help Xinyun drive out that corrosive energy and find a way to recover my own strength. I’ll think of a way to find a fireseed spirit mushroom later. Maybe there’ll be another way to help Xinyun!”

Determined to upgrade, Bai Yunfei finished up his train of thought and grabbed ahold of an accessory. “Upgrade!”

.....

For the next three days, Bai Yunfei continued to upgrade when he could. It wasn’t as fast-paced as before, and he took breaks whenever he ran out of soulforce. Whenever he woke up, he’d wait for his soulforce to return to normal so that he’d be ready for any sort of danger in the future.

Tang Xinyun herself spent the few days she was up trying hard to recuperate and didn’t come out of her room. Bai Yunfei didn’t go see her either. Ever since the day Tang Xinyun had cried herself to sleep, Bai Yunfei felt as if a demon of temptation had cast a spell of

regret over him. Even now, he didn't know how he should treat Tang Xinyun.

Both Cang Yu and Jiang Fan had completely healed more than a week ago. Hence, Jiang Fan and Song Lin went with the men from the Xiao to find anything they could about the destruction of the Sun, hoping to find clues that might point them in the direction of either the Beast Taming School or the Soul Refining School.

Their attempts proved fruitless. Not a single definite clue or even proof of their involvement was to be found...

Only Xiao Binzi and the others knew about the Soul Refining School, but since that was of an extreme importance to them and that there was no proof they were colluding with the Beast Taming School, Xiao Binzi warned them not to tell anyone else. The implications of the truth would be major if they really did try to investigate the trails of the two.

Having been instructed by Xiao Rang, Xiao Er began to zealously buy up all the accessories he could. Now that they were the strongest soul cultivator family in Curopia City, they weren't lacking money at all. They were even able to return or sell all the accessories Bai Yunfei had given them, giving Xiao Er even more spending power. While they would lose money, it wasn't a big loss for them. Though he still couldn't figure out the mystery, Xiao Er didn't feel like trying to divine what 'goal' Bai Yunfei had set. Xiao Er only cared about purchasing 'new' accessories.

By the third night, Bai Yunfei had accumulated even more +10 accessories that granted spirit. He began to slowly upgrade them...

He was worried—or perhaps it'd be better to say he was 'waiting'—for the side effects from over upgrading to appear... even though there might not be any signs, it was going to come nonetheless!

Chapter 274: Scared but Unhurt

Upgrade Failed
Equipment Destroyed

The jade bracelet that had been in Bai Yunfei’s hand disintegrated into powder. Sighing, Bai Yunfei stored the powder into his ring.

“That makes the eighteenth one. I’m in bad form tonight...”

He was somewhat disappointed by the results. It wasn’t easy for him to accumulate so many +10 accessories, and he wanted to get one of them to a decently high upgrade level. If not +13, then at the very least one or two +12 ones, but unfortunately, not a single one of the eighteen accessories had reached +11!

Just as he was deciding on whether or not to stop upgrading and take a break, a stab of pain surged through Bai Yunfei’s body, turning his face pale.

Like a maelstrom, the soulforce in his body started to surge violently out of his control!

“It’s here!!” Bai Yunfei realized with a start. This was the biggest concern he had when overusing the Upgrade Technique!

Raising the hand with the Ardent Sun Glove on it, Bai Yunfei shot out a small fist-sized fireball by activating the glove’s effect for a fireball strike.

“Boom!!”

The fireball slammed into a table in the middle of his room, exploding it into pieces and ashes almost instantly.

This was meant as a warning and message to everyone else. As

soon as Bai Yunfei shot the fireball, he blacked out.

There was actually no need for Bai Yunfei to use this as a signal. As soon as his soulforce went out of control, the surge had alerted everyone.

When the soulforce of an early-stage Soul Ancestor went loose, people would be hard-pressed to ignore it.

“Bang!” The doors to Bai Yunfei’s room slammed open as Xiao Binzi came flying in like a tornado to Bai Yunfei’s bed.

Because of Bai Yunfei’s warning beforehand, Xiao Binzi had decided to keep a close watch on the area for any fluctuations, hence his quick arrival.

“Yunfei!” Upon seeing the shape of Bai Yunfei, Xiao Binzi’s hand flew to his head. Xiao Binzi began to push his own soulforce into Bai Yunfei’s body.

“What is happening!?” As soon as his soulforce entered Bai Yunfei’s body, Xiao Binzi could immediately see what was going on inside. Like a flood, Bai Yunfei’s soulforce was surging out of control, attempting to tear Bai Yunfei’s body to pieces!

“Perhaps... the weakening of his essence fireseed caused this reaction? Or did the men from the Soul Refining School leave something in Bai Yunfei’s body without me noticing!?” Two different ideas popped up into Xiao Binzi’s mind for consideration, but he hadn’t enough time to really think about it. Swiftly bracing Bai Yunfei, he pressed a palm to Bai Yunfei’s chest and pushed his soulforce into his body to try and restrain Bai Yunfei’s soulforce!

Being able to restrain and control the soulforce of a Soul Ancestor without causing injury required two factors. One was an incredible strong amount of soulforce, and the other was an incredibly precise amount of control. As a late-stage Soul King, Xiao Binzi fulfilled both requirements, but Cang Yu did not.

The pattering sounds of footsteps made itself known as several

people ran across the courtyard and into Bai Yunfei's room. Jiang Fan and Song Lin were the first to appear through the doorway, but Xiao Rang and Xiao Xin weren't far behind. Xiao Er came puffing past the doorway a moment later as well.

"First elder, what's going on? What's happening to Yunfei? And why now?" Song Lin exclaimed in panic as soon as he saw the state Bai Yunfei was in.

A grave expression settled on Xiao Binzi's face, "I'm not certain either, perhaps it has to do with the injuries Yunfei had received. It's fortunate that I can contain his soulforce, however."

As he spoke, a wave of red light flowed out of Xiao Binzi's body as his elemental fire began to enter Bai Yunfei's body. Since Bai Yunfei had no elemental fire, there was no reaction from his essence fireseed, causing Xiao Binzi to sigh. If Bai Yunfei had any, treatment would've been far easier.

Another set of footsteps could be heard shortly afterward, prompting everyone to turn their heads to the door. This time, it was the pale-faced Tang Xinyun and Cang Yu, who was accompanying her. The look on Tang Xinyun's face was frantic as she ran to Bai Yunfei's bed, "First elder... what's happening to Yunfei?" Panicking as she asked.

On the other side, Song Lin tried to console her, "Junior, don't worry. With the first elder here, Yunfei will be just fine."

Xiao Binzi nodded as well, "Yes, don't worry. I've already restrained most of his soulforce. He won't be in any danger."

Xiao Binzi's words comforted Tang Xinyun, but they weren't enough to fully cure her of her concerns. Right next to Bai Yunfei's bed, Tang Xinyun's lips could be seen quivering as her eyes stared persistently at him.

With the help of Xiao Binzi, the out-of-control soulforce in Bai Yunfei's body slowly began to calm down and return to its original

state. The more it calmed down, the more Bai Yunfei's face began to regain its color. His breathing wasn't as rough anymore, and by the time Xiao Binzi drew back his hand, Bai Yunfei was back on his bed deep asleep.

The side-effects from overusing the Upgrade Technique hadn't been as violent as the first time. Bai Yunfei had been far too weak at that point and was also at a very important juncture of becoming a Soul Sprite. Thus, the effects had been far more life-threatening, but not this time. He had Xiao Binzi helping him so nothing bad would happen.

.....

In time, Bai Yunfei soon found himself awake on his bed again, but there was a warm feeling on his face as if someone was wiping his face with a towel. Reaching a hand up, Bai Yunfei could feel the soft but warm touch of someone's wrist.

"Ah! Yunfei, you're up!?" Someone's very gentle voice was registered by Bai Yunfei's ears.

Struggling to open his eyes, Bai Yunfei could just barely make out the sight of a young but pretty woman staring back at him with joy.

"Err... Xinyun?" Bai Yunfei tentatively asked as he tried to sit up on his bed. Shaking his head to shake off the remaining drowsiness, he asked, "What are you doing here? This is my..."

Taking a seat herself, Tang Xinyun asked, "How're you feeling? If you're not comfortable still, lay back down. I'll go get the first elder and see how your wounds are doing..."

"Ahh... don't worry, I'm fine."

Shaking his head again, Bai Yunfei was now finally awake. When he thought about just why he had fallen unconscious, Bai Yunfei decided to take a look at his current condition. Upon inspecting himself, he sighed in relief; he wasn't in as bad a condition as he

thought.

He looked back up, but the only other person he could see in the room was Tang Xinyun. “Xinyun, how... how long was I out for?”

Tang Xinyun herself looked relieved to see that Bai Yunfei was doing fine, so she didn’t get up to go find Xiao Binzi or anyone else. “Not very long, just one whole night, that’s all.”

“Oh...” He nodded sensibly, but then halfway through the motions, his head flew back up, “Hold on. Xinyun. Did you... were you looking over me the entire night?”

Reddening in the face, Tang Xinyun said, “I... I didn’t feel comfortable having the Xiao family look after you, so I...”

“Miss Tang, how is brother Bai faring? I’ve brought him a spare change of clo—” Someone’s voice suddenly called out a moment before the door was pressed open to reveal Xiao Er.

As soon as he saw the two people, he froze where he stood. For one whole second, he was still, and then he turned about and pushed through the half-hinged door to walk out. “Who said this door was broken?” He muttered to himself, “Who told me to fix it? Really now, I wasted a trip here...”

As he grumbled to himself, he closed the still half-broken door after him as if he hadn’t noticed the two people inside the room.

A drop of sweat fell down Bai Yunfei’s head. What an utterly terrible improvisation, using the broken door as an excuse...

“Yunfei... please... please let go...” A barely audible whisper came to Bai Yunfei from the side. Turning his head, Bai Yunfei could see Tang Xinyun’s tomato-red face as she tried to move her left hand.

Upon lowering his head, Bai Yunfei realized that his own hand had been holding her wrist this entire time! Tang Xinyun had forgotten Bai Yunfei had grabbed her since she had been excited to see Bai Yunfei awake. It wasn’t until Xiao Er came into the room and saw the two ‘holdings hands and whispering sweet nothings’

that he realized he shouldn't be intruding.

Letting go, Bai Yunfei shook his head apologetically, "I... I didn't mean to do that..."

But his fellow crafter stood up anyway. Still red in the face, she said, "I... I'm going to get the first elder and master. Don't... don't move, okay?"

And just like that, the young woman fled the room in a hurry. Bai Yunfei scratched his head in embarrassment before sitting back on his bed without any further movements.

Chapter 275: The Blabbermouth Xiao Er

Since he had escaped this second brush with danger unscathed, Bai Yunfei didn't feel any discomfort about overusing the Upgrade Technique. Another boulder had been lifted off his shoulders and Bai Yunfei couldn't feel any happier.

Afterward, Bai Yunfei was stuck under Xiao Binzi's close watch for several days as he 'trained.' There were times he managed slip away and hide in his room to continue upgrading in secret since he knew that it wouldn't be long before they would return to the Crafting School. With so little time left, Bai Yunfei was determined to make as many accessories that could give spirit as quickly as he could. By being given so many accessories, Xiao Er was practically run ragged with how often he had to go around for them.

Bai Yunfei was of course in a very normal state of mind when he was upgrading. He conserved enough soulforce before stopping each time for a break. This was the most optimal path of upgrading since fainting would just mean more alarm and misunderstandings from Xiao Binzi and the others.

He wasn't hiding from Tang Xinyun anymore either. Every night, he'd accompany her through the courtyards for a brisk walk around. Each walk was comprised of him racking his brains for a topic to help cheer her up. He didn't want her to think about her wounds or her inability to train in elemental fire.

Tang Xinyun herself seemed to know what Bai Yunfei was trying to do, but she never talked to him about it.

Four days later, most of Tang Xinyun's wounds had stabilized, and her soulforce had slightly balanced the corrosive energy. As of right now, she appeared as nothing more than a normal late-stage Soul Sprite, but she couldn't use any of her soulforce. Else she would risk the corrosive energy making another outbreak.

The matter with the house of Sun was pretty much over as well.

With no reason left for the crafters to stay in Curopia City, Xiao Binzi and the others immediately decided to return to the Crafting School.

.....

Early the next morning, Xiao Er could be seen walking out of the main courtyards. The guests from the Crafting School were set to leave this morning, so the Xiao were preparing to send them off.

“Fourth master, please wait one moment...”

From not too far away, someone called out to him. Turning his head, Xiao Er asked, “Uncle Xu, what’s the matter?”

The man named ‘Uncle Xu’ caught up to Xiao Er first before he said anything. “Young master, we’ve managed to accomplish what you asked for the day before yesterday. There’s a total of 2500 items in here, but the quality is mixed. We did not have enough time to look through them all.”

A small black ring was presented to Xiao Er.

“Eh? We were able to finish?” Xiao Er spoke in slight surprise. He took the ring with smile and a nod, “Thank you for your work, uncle Xu.”

“Haha, it was no trouble at all if this was for the sake of the young master!” Uncle Xu waved his hand before turning around to leave.

Inside this ring was yet another batch of accessories. After ten whole days of going on a splurging spree, Xiao Er had practically wiped out the entire market.

There was still the ‘black market.’ Markets that existed anywhere and everywhere, and as the number one family in the city, it’d be expected for the Xiao to have connections to certain underground factions. What Xiao Er had asked from uncle Xu was that he go to the black market and purchase any accessories he might come across. Even if it might come from a ‘dubious’ background.

“That should make this space ring the very last batch of accessories for brother Bai...” Xiao Er stored the ring away before continuing on his way to the main courtyard.

.....

Gathered there already were Xiao Binzi, Cang Yu, Jiang Fan, Song Lin, Bai Yunfei, and Tang Xinyun. Xiao Rang, Xiao Xin, and the other members of the household were there as well in one big group. At the moment, Xiao Rang was speaking politely to Xiao Binzi and Cang Yu about some matter while Jiang Fan and Song Lin were both speaking with several of the younger members from the Xiao. Tang Xinyun was speaking to Xiao Er’s third sister, Xiao Yingxue with their hands clasped together.

From Bai Yunfei’s perspective, Tang Xinyun and Xiao Yingxue looked like a pair of sisters. When Xiao Yingxue pressed a container of rouge face powder into Tang Xinyun’s hands, Bai Yunfei was surprised. In just a short ten days, Tang Xinyun had already reached a relatively strong level of friendship with Xiao Yingxue.

“Sister Xinyun, please take care of yourself when you get back. Your older sister will wish you a quick recovery. When you have time, I hope you will not forget to come back to Curopia City and see me.” Xiao Yingxue spoke to her friend in a rather impatient tone.

Tang Xinyun slightly nodded her head. She too, looked unwilling to part. “Sis Yingxue, don’t worry. I won’t forget. I’ll see you soon.”

“Heehee, sister Xinyun, let me tell you, next time you should...” The rest of what she was trying to say grew faint as Xiao Yingxue leaned in to whisper the rest to Tang Xinyun’s ear. Her eyes flickered to Bai Yunfei for a moment as she whispered.

“Ah! Sis Yingxue, what are you saying!?” Tang Xinyun cried out. Her face was reddening, “It’s not what you think it is”

“What? It isn’t? I could’ve sworn...”

“.....”

For some reason, Bai Yunfei turned his head to look at the two whispering females. After a quick glance, he turned his head back and coincidentally caught sight of Xiao Er who was just walking into the courtyard.

“Brother Bai.” Xiao Er greeted as he approached Bai Yunfei with a smile.

Smiling in return, Bai Yunfei replied, “Brother Xiao, we’re about to leave. In the past few days, I’ve bothered you plenty, please allow me to—”

He was just about to take out yet another soul armament to give Xiao Er when Xiao Er immediately waved his hands to stop him, “Brother Bai, please don’t take out another soul armament, I feel guilty enough already! Giving me another one would make me feel ashamed...”

“Oh...” Bai Yunfei replied. Brightening up Bai Yunfei said, “I have to say, brother Xiao, you’re far too easy going. If it were anyone else, they’d look forward to getting another soul armament, but you refuse them!”

“Aren’t you the easy going one? You’re handing soul armaments out left and right...” Xiao Er’s lips twitched slightly as he thought to himself. “One soul armament is enough for me. The other was already confiscated anyways...” He looked rather resentful.

With his authority, there was no way Xiao Rang would let Xiao Er have an earth tier soul armament. The confiscation had been a sting to his heart, and Xiao Er regretted how silly he was for showing off both soul armaments he got...

“Confiscated?” Bai Yunfei asked, “What for?”

“Ah... it’s nothing really...” Xiao Er shook his head. The space ring given to him by his uncle Xu appeared in his hand, “Brother

Bai, this is the last delivery I have for you. Please take it and feel free to give back any portion you don't want."

Having not expected yet another delivery, Bai Yunfei looked touched. "I... thank you then, brother Xiao." He took the ring.

"Haha, no need to thank me. The gift you gave me is worth far more than what I've given you. In truth, it feels like I took advantage of you, so I feel rather guilty..."

"Little brother, what are you talking about, and why are you thanking each other?"

Just at that moment, the curious Xiao Yingxue and Tang Xinyun walked up to the two.

"It's nothing, brother Bai had me buy several things, that's all." Xiao Er explained.

"Buy?" Xiao Yingxue stared suspiciously at the ring in Bai Yunfei's hand. As if the sight of it had brought back some memories, a furious light entered her eyes, "Ah! I haven't paid you back yet you brat! You took all of my jewelry, when will you pay me back!?"

"Ah? I..." Xiao Er froze in place. Since he had been so busy with buying even more accessories for Bai Yunfei, he had completely forgotten to give back all of the accessories that Bai Yunfei had returned.

Knowing that he had to placate his sister somehow, Xiao Er smiled, "Well, hehe... don't worry, sister! Give me a bit and I'll give you a piece that's ten times better! You can choose any and as many as you like!"

He had plenty of accessories with him in any case.

"That's good then..." Xiao Yingxue nodded in satisfaction. "You better not try to trick me with any ordinary piece, or we're going to have a good talk! I want some jewelry from Jade Pavilion! One that's just like... just like the one sister Xinyun has."

She pointed at the Yun's Soul Ring that was on Tang Xinyun's left ring finger.

“Okay, okay! No problem! I'll definitely do as you wa—” Smiling, Xiao Er was about to say something else when he froze mid-speech. Looking closer at the ring on Tang Xinyun's finger, a curious expression appeared his face. “Hm? This ring...”

“Crap!” Bai Yunfei's heart skipped a beat.

Before Bai Yunfei could say anything, Xiao Er blurted out, “Isn't this the prized ring from Baiyu Pavilion? How...”

His eyes flew to look at Bai Yunfei in complete shock. “Brother Bai!” He exclaimed, “You had me buy out all of the jewelry in Curopia City just for the sake of choosing a ring to gift to miss Tang!?”

“.....”

A blanket of silence descended over the courtyard as everyone turned to look at Bai Yunfei in astonishment.

All Bai Yunfei could do was stand there with a sweat drop rolling down his face...

Chapter 276: Returning to the School

What Xiao Er said piqued the interest of everyone in the courtyard. One by one, they turned to look at Bai Yunfei strangely.

For a few scant seconds, Xiao Rang and Xiao Xin looked surprised. At last, they had found the reason for Bai Yunfei's strange request! It was a little strange, but it made sense too...

In their minds, the two thought, "Ah, the youth of today..."

Even Xiao Binzi and the other crafters seemed to smile knowingly at Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun after they got over their shock.

"You've got to be kidding me! How good is your memory!" Bai Yunfei roared to himself. The fact that Xiao Er was looking at him with eyes of worship was more than enough for Bai Yunfei's lips to twitch.

He hadn't thought that Xiao Er would recognize the Yun's Soul Ring out of the several thousand accessories that had passed through his hands the past few days. Bai Yunfei himself couldn't even remember any of the +11 accessories, so he was confident that no one would be able to tell where she got that ring from.

But!

Somehow!

Xiao Er had managed to tell!

Coincidence. That's all it was. The Yun's Soul Ring was the prized treasure from the most expensive jewelry store in Curopia City, the 'Jade Pavilion.' To talk a bit about the ring's background, it was a ring that was rarely seen by other people. It was only because Xiao Er had offered a hefty sum of money that he was able to buy the ring from the shopkeeper, with a little coercion of course, but it was a purchase nonetheless.

Even more coincidental was the fact that it was Xiao Er himself

who had made the purchase. That was why the ring had stuck in his mind.

Tang Xinyun herself was shocked by what she was hearing. Under the watchful eyes of everyone else, her face started to grow extremely red before she ducked her head down and stuffed her left hand back into her robes. Though she was unable to meet anyone's eyes, Tang Xinyun's had gained a suspicious light in.

“Wow... lord Bai is such a romantic!!” Xiao Yingxue sighed, her hands clutched at her chest. “If the man I favored did that for me, I'd be the happiest girl alive!!”

How frightful to see such a reaction from the third sister of the Xiao... should what she said be spread through Curopia City, the city would suffer yet another ‘buyout’ of accessories. She was, after all, a beautiful woman with plenty of suitors—many of them being wealthy young heirs themselves.

“Uh... I...” Under the ‘admiring’ eyes of everyone else, Bai Yunfei felt his back start to grow slick with sweat, “I... I actually... I was...”

Seeing how Bai Yunfei was so ‘embarrassed,’ Xiao Er couldn't help but smile. Giving him a knowing nod, he said, “No need to explain, brother Bai. I understand now...”

“I” Bai Yunfei felt faint. “Why didn't I realize how much of a blabbermouth you were!? In a single line, you've got me into a heap of trouble!”

“Hehe, lord Bai is a considerate person. That's how young people should be.”

“How noisy...” Xiao Binzi seemed to be looking on in rebuke, but there was a hint of a smile on his lips.

“Hehe, what youngsters do today is truly quite unconventional. How fortunate that Yunfei is a patient one...” Cang Yu smiled as well. From how she was looking at Bai Yunfei, her opinion of him

was surely improving.

From the side, Jiang Fan and Song Lin were both staring at Bai Yunfei with a mixture of shock and admiration. Silently, the two of them gave him a thumbs up from the side.

“.....” Bai Yunfei remained silent. There was nothing more that needed to be said, so he didn’t bother to say anything.

He was at a loss for words, really. “Ugh, it’ll be hard to explain things to Xinyun now...”

The look on Xiao Er’s face indicated that he had thought about something, but when he saw the glaring look being directed at him by Bai Yunfei, Xiao Er felt a chill run up his spine as if some sort of danger was about to approach. Wisely deciding to shut up, Xiao Er gave Bai Yunfei an embarrassed smile.

.....

Everyone continued to talk with one another after the previous interlude was over, and after that, Xiao Binzi and the others finally decided to bid farewell and leave.

Tang Xinyun went with Cang Yu on her flying sword, Bai Yunfei went with Xiao Binzi on his flying sword, and Jiang Fan brought Song Lin with him on his flying sword as they traveled through the sky.

There was no need for the group to return to the Crafting School quickly. Jiang Fan's traveling speed wasn’t even fast enough to keep up with Xiao Binzi’s anyways, so they took a break twice along the way. On the afternoon of the third day, the group finally arrived back within the territory of the school.

.....

Both Zi Jin and Kou Changkong were surprised to hear the report following their return. Neither of the two had expected such a series of developments to occur—two of the more prominent disciples had been injured and their potential had been damaged.

When Zi Jin looked at both Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun's conditions, he was as stumped as Xiao Binzi. While they were injured, no outsider could help them. If they wanted to fully heal, they would have to depend on themselves.

The two of them were prepared for such an answer, but Bai Yunfei still couldn't help but feel disappointed to hear confirmation from Zi Jin. Tang Xinyun herself didn't look as if she had expected anything else. In fact, she looked more like she was trying to console Bai Yunfei, but her attempts only made Bai Yunfei feel even more guilty.

Huangfu Rui had been the most furious; she had been the first to want to go over to the Beast Taming School to eradicate them all. When Cang Yu had been injured, her jade slip clearly reflected her state it for Huangfu Rui to see. If not for her quick turn around and Zi Jin's interference, Huangfu Rui would've run off to where Bai Yunfei and the others were. After hearing their story, Huangfu Rui was angry beyond belief.

A conflict between two schools wasn't a simple matter. It would involve far too many parties if one did break out. Thus, Zi Jin held Huangfu Rui back, saying that they needed time to judge the Beast Taming School's reaction first. Though the Beast Taming School had destroyed any proof of their involvement, both parties were well aware of the truth. If they wanted to have an underground fight with one another or even a full-out war, the Beast Taming School would've indicated it already.

As for the information regarding the Soul Refining School, Zi Jin had warned everyone to not let anyone else know. Bai Yunfei was even told to leave this matter to the elders and to not mind it anymore. Zi Jin told Bai Yunfei that it was more important to work on recovering his essence fireseed.

There was also another problem regarding Jiang Fan's meeting with Bai Yunfei back in the Northern Plains Province. By accident, Jiang Fan had said that back in Stonegroove City, he had thought

that Bai Yunfei had been one of their own since he had a soulbound armament, the Fire-tipped Spear. Jiang Fan decided to help Bai Yunfei out because of that assumption.

This in turn led to Zi Jin and the others being quite suspicious, but Bai Yunfei had prepared an ‘excuse’ a long time ago. He managed to bluff his way out.

If Zi Jin and the others were to learn about this before Bai Yunfei was accepted as a disciple, they would’ve been extremely suspicious, but after half a year with Bai Yunfei, they were all acutely aware of his ‘talent,’ ‘strange situation,’ and ‘background.’ For those reasons, none of the elders found it overly suspicious, though they were all still surprised nonetheless.

.....

Nightfall.

In the Northern Point of the Crafting School was a single courtyard with beams of multi-colored light flowing out of it. Like a spectrum of dazzling colors, the night sky felt like a dreamland to anyone that saw it.

The reason for this spectacular sight was because of the crystal ‘lighthouse.’

It was the special lantern Bai Yunfei had won back in Redfire City, the ‘Prisma Lantern.’ Since Huangfu Rui had taken such a liking to it, Bai Yunfei had it transported to her own personal courtyard—with Sima Dong’s permission, of course.

Affixed to the lighthouse was the Prisma Lantern. At its core was a single crystal. With its spectacular and well-made design, the lantern was capable of bending and refracting light in any way it saw fit.

Seated on top of the lighthouse, Huangfu Rui could be seen resting her chin on her hands. She was staring up at the sky. Xiao Rourou was on top of Xiao Bai as the bird flew around the sky.

Though she was humming to herself a song only children knew, she could be seen sometimes turning her head to look back at the two figures sitting side by side.

The gentle breeze that usually came with night was soft but strong enough to blow several strands of hair from Tang Xinyun's face. Brushing some of the dancing strands behind her ears, she turned to look up at the starry canopus as if wondering about something.

By her side, Bai Yunfei was hesitating.

Finally drumming up some courage, Bai Yunfei managed to say, "Xinyun, I have something I need to tell you..."

Chapter 277: Violet Soul Bracelet

Finally drumming up some courage, Bai Yunfei managed to say, “Xinyun, I have something I need to tell you...”

Withdrawing her gaze from the sky, Tang Xinyun smiled at Bai Yunfei, “Is it about the Yun’s Soul Ring?”

He paused. “Xinyun, I... I’m sorry. I didn’t want to lie to you, but I...”

“There’s no need to apologize to me.” Tang Xinyun interrupted him. “Everyone has their own secrets. By saving me, you had to reveal your secret. I still don’t know what that secret is, but if I had to guess, your secret is inconceivable but dangerous. Hiding the secret from me is just... human nature...”

“Xinyun, I...”

Her understanding of the situation made Bai Yunfei pause. Her gentle smile paired with her pretty complexion was more than enough to have such an effect on him. Tang Xinyun was one of the people Bai Yunfei could trust completely, and since the situation had already reached this point, there wasn’t a point in hiding his secret anymore.

He decided then.

“Xinyun, I’m sure you can guess it by now. The unique ability of the Yun’s Soul Ring is something I gave it.”

“Gave!?” Despite having such a suspicion, Tang Xinyun was still surprised to hear it from Bai Yunfei’s own mouth. “Are you saying you can...”

“That’s right. The Yun’s Soul Ring was originally an ordinary ring. I gave that ring a special effect.” Bai Yunfei confirmed his ability again. “I’ve a special ability I can’t explain. I guess it’s like a scientific law. As long as I think about it, I can ‘upgrade’ an item. By extension, I can give an item even more power and all sorts of

special effects.”

“That’s...” She was tongue-tied. What Bai Yunfei was saying was simply beyond her comprehension.

Now that the secret was out, Bai Yunfei felt a whole lot better about himself. He didn’t need to hide anything anymore. He smiled, the sight of his companion’s quivering lips and wide-open eyes had such an effect on him. “I know it’s hard to explain, so how about this, I’ll let you see what I was talking about...”

“Did the ‘Violet Soul Bracelet’ get taken back by the third elder?”

“The Violet Soul Bracelet?” Tang Xinyun asked. “No,” she shook her head, “the master said that it’d be my welcoming gift so I didn’t need to return it.”

“Really now? But isn’t the Violet Soul Bracelet one of the most precious soul armaments the Crafting School owns? If the third elder gives such a special item to you, wouldn’t the others get jealous?” Bai Yunfei asked in concern.

“Haha, not at all. The other sisters are very kind people and look after me. The master said that they all have their own soul armaments. Though theirs aren’t as strong as the Violet Soul Bracelet, they’re all still one-of-a-kind...”

“Oh? That’s good then. Xinyun, let me see the Violet Soul Bracelet then.” His eyes sparkled.

“Alr—alright...” Tang Xinyun nodded. The sleeve of her robes pulled back to reveal the delicate skin of her left arm, and on her wrist, a violet bracelet hummed softly with a violet light.

She was in the middle of taking the bracelet off her wrist when Bai Yunfei hurried to stop her, “Keep it on. I just need to touch it. That’s all.”

Since the bracelet was responsible for helping Tang Xinyun recover her soulforce, Bai Yunfei had no intention of taking it away from her.

Under the watchful eyes of Tang Xinyun, Bai Yunfei reached a hand out to touch the bracelet.

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: Water

Attribute: +960 Spirit

Equipment Effect: Increase rate of spirit recovery by 10%.

Upgrade Requirement: 180 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei's mouth dropped open by a slight amount. Though he expected to see abnormally good stats, it was still really astonishing to see it for himself.

“Low-heaven tier! That's even higher than the Violet Soul Ring!! Having it grant 960 spirit is already far more than what my Violet Soul Ring can give at +10! The effect's really amazing too... it can increase the rate of recovery by a percentage!” Eyes shining brightly, Bai Yunfei was lost in his own thoughts.

“Yunfei, what's wrong?” Concerned about how Bai Yunfei was staring off into the distance, Tang Xinyun decided to ask him a question.

“Ah? Oh... it's... it's nothing.” He responded. “Xinyun, the Violet Soul Bracelet has a great effect, but with the power I told you about, its effects will become even greater. You'll understand what I mean in a moment.”

“Uhm... just like that?” Tang Xinyun asked. From what she was imagining, she thought that the special method Bai Yunfei was talking about would involve recrafting the item.

“Just like that. Just wait one second.” Bai Yunfei nodded.

His eyes narrowed as he started to concentrate. “Upgrade.”

“Upgrade.”

“Upgrade.”

“.....”

.....

When Bai Yunfei suddenly went quiet, Tang Xinyun was confused by the situation. She could sense his soulforce fluctuating just slightly, but then she realized something, the soulforce coming from the Violet Soul Bracelet was... changing!?

It had to be an illusion, she thought, but she was quick to realize that even her own soulforce was changing! And not on a minute level, this was a very noticeable change!

She was speechless. For a good while, all she could do was stare at Bai Yunfei in dumb shock.

Another two minutes had gone by before Bai Yunfei’s eyes opened once more in joy!

Tang Xinyun was surprised. Her soulforce was coming back to her at an even faster rate. By her estimations, the soulforce was fighting against the corrosive energy roughly thirty percent faster than before!

“Haha, it worked! And it’s a soulforce recovering effect too!” Bai Yunfei remarked in joy.

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: Water

Upgrade Level: +10

Attribute: +960 Spirit

Additional Attribute: +430 Spirit

Equipment Effect: Increase rate of spirit recovery by 10%.

+10 Additional Effect: Increase rate of spirit recovery by 30%.

Upgrade Requirement: 180 Soulpoints

How lucky that another soulforce recovering effect would appear

as soon as he upgraded it to +10! And by thirty percent, no less!

“Yunfei... le—let go...”

In the midst of his excitement, Bai Yunfei had completely forgotten about Tang Xinyun. Realizing that her voice was far more shy than normal, he turned to look at her in confusion, “Xinyun, what’d you say?”

“My... my hand... let go...” Bai Yunfei looked as though what he was doing was nothing important, but Tang Xinyun’s face was bright red as she tried to tug her left hand away.

It was when her hand started to be tugged away from Bai Yunfei that he realized his hand wasn’t on the Violet Soul Bracelet anymore. At some point in his excitement, his hand had clutched her wrist.

When Tang Xinyun tried to pull her hand away, Bai Yunfei’s hand slipped down her impeccably soft wrist.

Several seconds passed before Bai Yunfei finally pulled his hand back. “Uh... Xinyun, I... I didn’t mean to do that... I was just... just excited...” He tried to explain.

“Yes.” Her head was bowed, but the flush on her cheeks was still noticeable. She didn’t seem to be in the mood to debate with Bai Yunfei whether it was intentional or not, so she changed the subject, “Yunfei, what did... what did you just do? Why do I feel...”

“Oh, that was the ‘special energy’ I was talking about, haha! Xinyun, did you feel your soulforce grow, and that you’re recovering more of it now?” Bai Yunfei inquired gleefully.

She slowly answered, “I do. Yunfei... do you really have such a strange power!? I’ve never heard of something like this... it’s... it’s impossible to think about, really!”

Bai Yunfei laughed. “This way, your rate of soulforce recovery might just beat out the corrosive energy, won’t it? You’ll be able to slowly drive it out!”

The very notion of that gave Tang Xinyun some semblance of hope. Nodding excitedly, she replied, “Yes! I can feel a change! I’m sure in no time at all, I’ll be able to completely eradicate it!”

“That’s good, very good...” Bai Yunfei sighed once more as if another weight had dropped from his shoulders.

A small expression of gratitude made its way up Tang Xinyun’s face as she looked at Bai Yunfei’s gleeful face, “Yunfei... thank you...”

“Eh?” Bai Yunfei’s eyes widened, “Don’t say thanks, I’d feel guilty if you did. Just get better as soon as you can and get rid of that corrosive energy. We can find a way to recover your essence fireseed then...”

“Recovering my essence fireseed...” That topic brought a dark shade of pain to Tang Xinyun’s face.

Bai Yunfei wanted nothing more than to slap his own face at that reaction. She was happy up until he went and brought up that topic.

“Xinyun, there’s no such thing as a definite in this world. There’ll be a way, don’t you worry! I’ll make sure to help you find a way to recover your essence fireseed! I promise!!”

“Yes.”

She nodded her head again, but this time even softer. There was clearly not many expectations to be had on this subject.

Hurrying to change the topic, Bai Yunfei said, “Oh, Xinyun. Please... keep this special energy of mine a secret to everybody. I don’t want anyone else to know about it...”

Tang Xinyun’s face finally softened into a smile. “Don’t worry. I know what this secret means to you. I won’t tell anyone else.”

Just as Bai Yunfei wanted to talk to her about something else, the voice of another person called out from behind them.

“Sis Yun! How much longer are you going to talk with brother strawhat? Dai Dai’s so sleepy! Dai Dai wants to go back and sleep!”

The two turned around. It was Huangfu Rui who was down below the lighthouse staring sleepily up at the two of them.

“Uh...” Upon realizing that it was getting late, Bai Yunfei said to Tang Xinyun, “Xinyun, I’ll be heading back first then. Take Doraemon to sleep and take care of yourself. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Tang Xinyun nodded her head. “Yes, you have a good night’s sleep. I know you’ve been very tired so recently...”

With that, Bai Yunfei watched Tang Xinyun take Huangfu Rui with her before he turned around to leave.

“Time for me to think of a way to recover my own essence fireseed...”

Chapter 278: Imprisoned Fireseed

Within the courtyard in the Western Point where all the disciples of the inner school resided, Bai Yunfei was currently in the basement of his own room.

In his hands were three different black space rings. At a primary glance, one of them was from the dead beast tamer, one from the Soul Refining School member, and the third was from Xiao Binzi. Since Bai Yunfei had killed the first two, the rings were, by rights, his ‘spoils of war.’

It was with disappointment that Bai Yunfei later put down the three rings. Of all the items in there, the only things of noticeable worth were:

Four soul armaments with the highest being only a mid-earth tier soul armament that was a broadsword—an item Bai Yunfei disliked using. There were also several mid-grade primal stones and a few low-grade soul crystals.

But nothing else in there was enough to really surprise him.

Not even a soul skill or secret training method could be found. This wasn’t a weird notion. Many people were forbidden to carry such items since soul cultivators killing another for their possessions was an everyday matter. If a lowly student were to stash a secret from their school and lose the item and their life to the hands of an outsider, it was possible the ‘secret’ would be no more.

After finishing his investigation, Bai Yunfei was far more disheartened than before. With no interest of inspecting the soul armaments or the worth of the primal stones, Bai Yunfei put everything away and started to calm himself down to try and go over the Art of Firebending.

As a further disappoint, Bai Yunfei felt no reaction from his

essence fireseed. Like before, not a single iota of his elemental fire could be felt. Everyday aside from upgrading his equipment, Bai Yunfei would try and heal his essence fireseed. Despite using plenty of different methods, his essence fireseed felt as if it was hibernating or playing dead. No matter how hard he tried, not a reaction was to be had.

At one point, he even tried to materialize his essence fireseed outside, but it looked like a flame on the verge of being snuffed out, and he couldn't draw in any more elemental fire to sustain it.

“Bang.”

One faint crack later, a fireball materialized over Bai Yunfei's right palm due to the Ardent Sun Glove. Staring at the fireball for a decent amount of time, he extended his left hand out. Following a small swipe, Bai Yunfei's essence fireseed was taken out of his body and placed within the fireball in his right hand.

Completely surrounded by fire, the essence fireseed looked as if it was a completely different element. Though both were of fire, the elemental fire and the fireball didn't seem to mix at all. Minutes went by with absolutely no changes before Bai Yunfei sighed and dissipated the fireball. Several more attempts were made: with the flames from the Flameblade Bracer, the Fire-tipped Spear, and even the Cataclysmic Seal, but to no avail.

“Ugh... essence fireseed. Are you dead or what!? You're acting no different than if you were completely gone...” Bai Yunfei thought sadly to himself as he watched the fire from the Cataclysmic Seal surround his essence fireseed.

As he was preparing to put the essence fireseed back into his body, a sudden flash of inspiration materialized in his head, “Hold on... the essence fireseed was damaged because I forced it to strengthen the Cataclysmic Seal. What if I...”

The light in his eyes flashed furiously as if trying to predict the possibilities of his deduction. Upon reaching a conclusion, he bit

his lower lip, “Who cares? The essence fireseed can’t possibly get any weaker than it is now. Even if I’m wrong, I won’t lose anything more!”

Determined, Bai Yunfei pulled out his essence fireseed and transmitted it into the Cataclysmic Seal!

In an instant, the Cataclysmic Seal began to vibrate and cry as if excited about having the essence fireseed back in it. The fire around the soul armament swelled up several times in size and filled the room with an even stronger shade of red than before.

The eyes on Bai Yunfei’s face widened in terror and shock. He was wrong! The state the essence fireseed was in wasn’t the weakest state it could be in! When the Cataclysmic Seal started to vibrate, Bai Yunfei realized then that his essence fireseed was even weaker than before.

Right now, it was on the verge of collapse!!

Having no time to regret his previous decision, Bai Yunfei tried his best to rein in the essence fireseed in the Cataclysmic Seal. His teeth were clenched so hard in his concentration that they began to creak slightly under the pressure, “Don’t fall apart! Don’t fall apart! Bring it together! Reform! Reform!!

“Reform! Reform dammit!!”

His furious roars gave pause to the Cataclysmic Seal. Almost as if understanding what its master was trying to do, the brilliant flames began to shrink down into the soul armament. Even the red eye-piercing light was lessening in intensity like it was attracted to some sort of magnet in the Cataclysmic Seal.

The panicked expression on Bai Yunfei’s face froze for a moment before being replaced by a gleeful one.

“It worked! It actually works this way!”

He could distinctly feel that the essence fireseed, which had been on the verge of collapse, was growing stronger bit by bit because of

the changes to the Cataclysmic Seal!!

.....

If the essence fireseed could be siphoned into the Cataclysmic Seal, the reverse should surely be possible as well!

It was a notion that had slipped Bai Yunfei's mind until now. Thinking about what should have happened, putting his essence fireseed into the Cataclysmic Seal should have resulted in it being used up again, but Bai Yunfei had no other choice. With this 'possibility' now fresh in his mind, he was sure that he had succeeded!

Zi Jin, Xiao Binzi, and the others had all thrown up their hands at this topic. Would he really be the one to find a solution? Did... none of the others owners of a lifebound armament ever think of this method before?

But that didn't matter now. This accidental discovery of how to heal the essence fireseed filled Bai Yunfei with no small amount of joy. Each sliver of restoration made him shiver with anticipation.

Bai Yunfei's loss of strength had been the source of extreme frustration for him. Determined as he was, Bai Yunfei still couldn't help but feel discouraged in the days leading up to today. Now that he had finally found a way, how could he not feel excited?

There was no way that man-made walls would be able to obstruct the flow of elements. The vast elemental fire in the world began to flow into the room. Flowing into the Cataclysmic Seal, the elemental fire began to be absorbed by essence fireseed, revitalizing it. In both intensity and warmth, the essence fireseed was growing stronger.

Time went on in this fashion. Bai Yunfei almost went without blinking the entire night as he stared at the Cataclysmic Seal. Each time he felt a change in the fluctuation, Bai Yunfei's heart skipped a beat. It was a long process, but he wasn't feeling tired just yet.

It wasn't until he heard the noises of several other students that Bai Yunfei realized it was noon of the next day.

After careful consideration, Bai Yunfei decided to call it quits. He'd go see Tang Xinyun, Zi Jin, and the others before coming back to pick up where he left off.

He willed his essence fireseed to come back into his body, but when nothing happened, a look of sheer shock appeared on his face!

His essence fireseed wasn't... it wasn't coming back!!

It was as if it was being imprisoned by the Cataclysmic Seal. There was no way out!

"What's going on... what's going on!? Why is this happening!?" Bai Yunfei despaired. In his flummox, he tried to recall the essence fireseed into his body several more times, but to no avail. The Cataclysmic Seal was now a trap and the essence fireseed was its prisoner.

Nearly a dozen minutes passed before Bai Yunfei finally gave up. Looking at the still-floating Cataclysmic Seal, Bai Yunfei didn't know what to do.

Several minutes had been needed before he finally calmed down. Sighing, Bai Yunfei looked at the soul armament in confusion, "There's still a connection, and the Cataclysmic Seal doesn't seem to be absorbing any of the elemental fire. It's still regenerating the essence fireseed, but it won't let it go... but why? Did the two... combine?

"It's healing sure, but it's very weak.

"Or maybe it's better to say that... it's too weak to even leave the Cataclysmic Seal? Do I have to wait until it's strong enough to call it back then?"

He shook his head wistfully, "I may have found a way to recover my essence fireseed, but is this a good thing or a bad thing, I

wonder?”

Chapter 279: Special Circumstances

In the Northern Point, the previous headmaster of the Crafting School, Zi Jin, was seated in his courtyard.

He was sitting in front of a stone table with a serious look on his face as he looked at a violet jade slip. On the table in front of him, a series of rare herbs had been laid out in a single spread. Each herb had a very rich miasma coming from it. They were clearly very precious herbs.

There were over a dozen other jade slips piled up one after another to his right.

On the other side were sheafs of papers with characters scribbled all over them.

After looking at the jade slip in his hand, Zi Jin lifted his hand holding a brush to write something down on a paper.

When the paper was filled up, he put down the brush and looked over the other sheafs of paper in deep concentration.

“If we use some fantawood tricolored herbs as a primer and then some bluefire dragonfruit as the main component, the refined energy from the firecore primal stones should be able to help Yunfei’s essence fireseed gain some strength...” Zi Jin pondered. He scratched his head to think and gather his thoughts properly.

But even that was was fruitless.

“The bluefire dragonfruit is disposed to Yin and is poisonous, so there’s some worrisome side-effects...”

“Then, what if we use viofire tribreath flowers?” Zi Jin looked at another stalk of herbs nearby before then shaking his head again. “No no, what is required to use the flower is far too harsh. If Yunfei can’t handle it...”

“These eight-thousand year old flameberries might do, but

without some aquacore fruits as a component, Yunfei would never be able to eat it!”

One by one, Zi Jin went through each of the herbs he had in stock to see if any of them could be used to help Bai Yunfei regrow his essence fireseed. There were reasons behind each herb. If the chances of success weren't too low, then was too dangerous for Bai Yunfei to take.

“Each of these drugs have unusual effects, but also have harmful effects in large amounts. If only the art of alchemy was still alive. Alas...

“The only option left is the fireseed spirit mushroom... it's the most well-known 'ordinary' drug, but it's unbelievably hard to get!” Zi Jin sighed. “Is our only option the soulbeast forest? Perhaps I can seek elder Hai's assistance. After his travels, the amount of herbs and minerals he has surely must be large. I haven't seen him in many years either. It's possible he might have one of them...”

The presence of another person drawing near snapped him out of his thought, “Eh? Is that Yunfei?”

Following a wave of his right hand, all of the things on the table disappeared into his space ring right before a knock on the door could be heard.

“Yunfei, come in.”

The door opened to reveal Bai Yunfei. Walking slowly into the room, the student bowed to his tutor. “Master.”

Zi Jin nodded. “Yunfei, what brings yo—”

His voice hitched in his throat as he realized that something was off with the situation. Startled, Zi Jin stared at Bai Yunfei in worry, “Yunfei, your... where is your essence fireseed!?”

It was a startling discovery. From what Zi Jin could tell, Bai Yunfei had no essence fireseed in him!!

A blur flew from where Zi Jin was seated to right in front of Bai Yunfei. The next second, Zi Jin's right hand pressed against Bai Yunfei's left shoulder. He began to inspect every part of Bai Yunfei's body for any semblance of his essence fireseed.

"It... it really isn't here! Yunfei, what happened? Did the last of it disappear last night!?" Upon the finishing of his investigation, Zi Jin was thunderstruck, and his eyes reflected his panic.

If such a reaction could be had from the previous headmaster of the Crafting School and a Soul King, it could be seen that Bai Yunfei was clearly important to him.

His reaction was heart-warming, to say the least. "Master, don't be worried. I'm fine. My essence fireseed is still here..." Bai Yunfei explained.

"What? It's not gone?" Zi Jin repeated in confusion. "But how?" He asked, "I don't sense it in your body at all..."

"It's not in my body, I took it out." Bai Yunfei nodded.

"What!? You took your essence fireseed out of your body!?" Gasping, Zi Jin immediately blew up in anger, "How could you be so rash, Yunfei!? How could you take it out! The longer it's out of your body, the more dangerous it gets! Where is it? Hurry up and put it back into your body!"

His eyes roamed around the room along with his soulsense to find it, but nothing could be found.

Bai Yunfei lifted his right hand up to summon the Cataclysmic Seal. "Master, I have it in my Cataclysmic Seal..."

Zi Jin paused here for a moment to stare incredulously at him. "What did you say? You put your essence fireseed in your lifebound armament? Furthermore... you had it stored in your space ring!?"

This time, Bai Yunfei found himself unable to reply. Nodding slowly, he asked, "Yes. Is... is that a problem?"

“It’s...” Continuing to stare at the Cataclysmic Seal above Bai Yunfei’s hand, Zi Jin said, “How could the essence fireseed be put into a space ring? If anything...”

He reached a tentative hand toward the Cataclysmic Seal, but as soon as his hand drew close, a fearsome blaze exploded from it, causing him to withdraw his hand. “What a strong repulsive force... it really is your essence fireseed!”

Unable to investigate the Cataclysmic Seal, Zi Jin thought to himself for a second. “Yunfei, explain to me everything that happened from the very beginning!”

“Yes, master.” Bai Yunfei replied. “Yesterday night, I...”

Word for word, he repeated the abridged story of what happened to him to Zi Jin. The Zi Jin listened intently to him, and every so often, a puzzled look could be seen.

By the time Bai Yunfei finished, he was aching with curiosity. “Master, in your observation, what is going on?”

Zi Jin shook his head. “I do not have a clue...”

“Ah!?”

“Yunfei, do you understand just how incredulous this situation is?” A resigned sigh escaped Zi Jin’s lips. “There is plenty that I know, but even this is beyond my comprehension...”

“Firstly,” he began, “one’s origin essence cannot be stored into a space ring....

“Secondly, not only does the origin essence get weaker the longer it’s outside its host body, there is a great deal of danger by the time half a day has gone by.

“But from what you are telling me, your essence fireseed has been outside your body since yesterday night without going back in... and even more importantly, your essence fireseed is ‘trapped’ inside your lifebound armament and can’t be recalled... I can’t say

I've ever seen a situation like this before."

"Does that mean..." Bai Yunfei started to ask, "No one in history has done this before?"

The slightest of grimaces twitched to life on Zi Jin's lips. "One's origin essence is extremely important. No soul cultivator would willingly have their origin essence outside of their body. People with lifebound armaments can almost be counted on one hand, and your situation has far too many unique factors. I have never heard of such a person with a case like yours throughout history. There is no precedent, and there are no references to go over. Thus I... I cannot guarantee or even say anything on behalf of your situation."

"Then... what can be done now? Master, I can't recall my essence fireseed to me. Isn't that supposed to be dangerous?" Bai Yunfei was starting to panic now. Zi Jin was supposed to be the all knowing one, but what would happen now since Zi Jin knew nothing? According to what he said, Bai Yunfei's essence fireseed would disappear after some time. How could that be good for him?

"Yunfei, don't worry yourself too much. Like I said, your situation is extremely different. That in itself isn't a bad thing." said Zi Jin. "Take a look at your essence fireseed, does it seem like it's getting weaker?"

Now that was a good question to ask.

Quickly trying to get a feel for his essence fireseed within the Cataclysmic Seal, Bai Yunfei was able to figure out his current situation. Looking back to Zi Jin, he said, "Master, why do I feel that my essence fireseed is a little stronger than before. It feels like it is actually recovering?"

"Oh, really!?" This was the first definite news Zi Jin heard all day. Smiling, he asked, "Then aside from being unable to recall your essence fireseed, do you feel unwell or anything of that sort?"

“Not at all.” Bai Yunfei replied.

The light in Zi Jin’s eyes shined even brighter now. For a whole minute, he did nothing but think. “If that’s the case, then you shouldn’t have to worry for now. Pay close attention to how your essence fireseed changes before making a decision. It may very well be what you say. Your essence fireseed is too weak to leave your lifebound armament, but it isn’t in any danger of disappearing. It might not be a bad thing for your lifebound armament and it doesn’t seem to be hurting you, so don’t worry. When it grows stronger, it may very well ‘return’ to your body by itself.”

Since Zi Jin didn’t have any better plans, Bai Yunfei nodded his head. “Yes, master. Your student will be careful.”

Chapter 280: An Unexpected Profit: the Cultivating Pendant

Now that Bai Yunfei's essence fireseed was being 'incubated' by the Cataclysmic Seal, he didn't dare neglect observing it in case some sort of violent outbreak or disappearance occurred, but after a week had passed with neither of the two scenarios happening, Bai Yunfei was sure that his essence fireseed was nice and cozy in the Cataclysmic Seal, like a child being fed by its loving mother. In this case, what it was being fed was a large amount of elemental fire and its growth was its gradual recovery.

The Cataclysmic Seal was left outside of the space ring since Bai Yunfei wanted to keep a close eye on it. This was the best way for it to absorb elemental fire, and even though it could absorb elemental fire from the safety of the space ring, outside it was capable of supplementing his essence fireseed with additional 'energy.'

Whenever he went outside to see Tang Xinyun or do an errand of his own, the Cataclysmic Seal would follow him. This in turn led to many students looking at him strangely. It was indeed flashy to have a soul armament rotate around someone, but when it was a red brick, that was when it became rather... awkward.

Since the Cataclysmic Seal didn't reveal any of its powerful elemental fire around it, the soul armament looked extremely normal as it floated about.

As time elapsed since his talk with Zi Jin, Bai Yunfei was feeling some semblance of ease. His essence fireseed was recovering at a slow, but steady rate. There'd be a day when it would make a full recovery. A day like that was something Bai Yunfei was extremely excited for.

He hadn't any idea how to 'jailbreak' his essence fireseed from the Cataclysmic Seal, but now didn't seem like the time to worry

about such a matter. Bai Yunfei had a feeling that nothing bad would happen, and if he were to wait, his essence fireseed would be able to be called back when it was fully healed.

Now that he didn't have to worry about it, Bai Yunfei could think about other things. The very first thought had been about Tang Xinyun's injuries, of course. Despite her having the Violet Soul Bracelet and the Yun's Soul Ring, her recovery was still a little bit slow (in Bai Yunfei's opinion). As a result, Bai Yunfei hatched a plan to try and upgrade even more accessories, hoping that he might find another one that would grant spirit and have a soulforce recovering effect. The sooner he could, the sooner he wouldn't have to feel regret.

Nightfall—

Bai Yunfei was on top of his bed. He was looking through the accessories Xiao Er had given him before they parted.

Bai Yunfei grabbed one of the accessories and prepared to start the upgrading process.

Equipment Grade: Normal

Elemental Affinity: None

Upgrade Requirement: 1 Soulpoint

The fact that it was a normal accessory gave Bai Yunfei some pause. “Why is there a normal tier equipment?”

Back in Curopia City, the lowest grade item Xiao Er had given Bai Yunfei had been superior at the very least. Not once did an accessory at the level of ‘normal’ appear.

He turned the agate necklace over to take a closer look. Some dirt could be seen right on the face. The necklace was a little damaged here and there. It was by no means an accessory that looked like it could be sold in a jewelry store.

In fact, it looked as if it had been buried in the earth for a good amount of time before it had been taken.

“Is it an antique?” Bai Yunfei thought. How old an item was bore no relevance to him. All he was interested in were the stats and effects.

As if to satisfy his curiosity, Bai Yunfei looked through the entire stockpile. All sorts of accessories could be seen: new ones, good ones, bad ones, and broken ones.

They were clearly not from the same source and had been taken from all sorts of places.

“That Xiao Er... he probably bought all that he could from the city and had to resort to other means...” Bai Yunfei shook his head. What shape the accessories were in didn’t matter much. He’d upgrade them all the same, hoping one would grant spirit.

His handling of the process had been quick and well-experienced. In no time at all, the accessories that gave spirit had been differentiated from the ones that didn’t.

In total, there were about a hundred of them.

Equipment Grade: Mid Human

Elemental Affinity: Water

Attribute: +160 Spirit

Upgrade Requirement: 70 Soulpoints

With this accessory in hand, Bai Yunfei looked at it closely before starting to think, “Upgra—

“Wait, what?” Something caught his eye.

On a second glance, Bai Yunfei saw something interesting, “Mid-human!? That’s a soul armament!!

“That’s...” He took another look at the item. It was a bluish-

green jade pendant with a bit of grime on it.

Suspicious.

Bai Yunfei didn't know what to think. Having an accessory that was a soul armament appear wasn't within his realm of expectations.

"Did Xiao Er find these ones specifically?" He wondered, but that didn't seem like a satisfactory answer. Accessory type soul armaments were quite rare. Xiao Er wouldn't throw it in with the rest of the 'damaged' goods.

"Then is this... a coincidence? Was this one found at random, and Xiao Er didn't bother to look into it?" Bai Yunfei's mind raced furiously, "Doesn't matter! I can't send it back anyhow, so let's accept this as a happy coincidence!"

Coming across such a rare soul armament made Bai Yunfei happy inside. Wiping the jade pendant clean of its filth, he began to inspect it even more. In the pendant itself was a small oval about the size of his thumb with several scratch marks running across it at every angle. Clearly, the pendant had been scratched from time and age. With all of the scratch marks running across it, Bai Yunfei would've thought that this was any normal accessory if he didn't possess the Equipment Upgrade Technique.

Feeling at the scratches, Bai Yunfei sighed to himself. "I'll upgrade it first and see if it can recover soulforce..."

"Upgrade."

.....

Several minutes later.

Upgrade Successful
Equipment Grade: Mid Human Elemental Affinity: Water Upgrade Level: +10

Attribute: +160 Spirit

Additional Attribute: +88 Spirit

Equipment Effect: Increase rate of cultivation by 8%.

Upgrade Requirement: 70 Soulpoints

“It doesn’t regenerate soulforce...” He was crestfallen for only a moment before he realized something, “Hold on... increase the rate of training!?”

Bewildered by the effect, Bai Yunfei muttered, “So it can increase my training speed... was there really such an effect? That’s great! 8% is almost a tenth of normal. That’s unbelievable though! Even the Violet Soul Ring isn’t as good as this.”

The pendant was put on soon after that. Aside from a slight increase in his soulforce, Bai Yunfei didn’t feel any different. Even after concentrating, he still couldn’t feel any noticeable changes, but he didn’t doubt the effects of the pendant. If it said it could increase the efficiency of training, then it would do so without a doubt.

This effect was probably not noticeable on the surface, so Bai Yunfei didn’t want to bother experimenting with it for now. Wearing it was more than enough. (The pendant given to Bai Yunfei by his mother was stored in his space ring in fear that it might break or get scratched when fighting.)

Touching the pendant against his chest, Bai Yunfei said, “If it can make me faster at training, I’ll call it the ‘Cultivating Pendant!’”

Happy that he had stumbled across such a great soul armament by accident, Bai Yunfei turned his ‘greedy’ eyes to the remaining few accessories. He hoped that there’d be another accessory that’d exceed his expectations.

After half an hour, Bai Yunfei finally began to upgrade all the

accessories that had spirit stats. Since he was well-experienced with the process, he was able to upgrade them all. Unbeknownst to him, the sky was growing brighter, symbolizing the coming of the next day.

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High

Elemental Affinity: None

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +60 Spirit

Soul Compatibility: 10%

Equipment Effect: Increase rate of spirit recovery by 3%.

Upgrade Requirement:30 Soulpoints

After failing to upgrade a dozen +9 equipments in a row, a notification Bai Yunfei had been looking for finally came up in his mind.

“It’s here! Soulforce recovery!!” Bai Yunfei’s eyes widened in joy. At last one had appeared!!

Chapter 281: I'll definitely do it!

The Northern Point of the Crafting School—

There was a single red brick floating alongside Bai Yunfei as he trekked up the slopes of the mountain. Any student who saw him would salute him, and he in turn would salute them.

In the Crafting School, the only ones who'd call him by name were those who knew him. Anyone else would simply refer to him by his title, and before long, Bai Yunfei found himself adapting to what it meant to be someone from the 'previous generation.'

"Oh? Yunfei, where are you heading off to in such a hurry?" The voice of someone could be heard. Turning his head, Bai Yunfei saw the senior of Tang Xinyun, Ling Yiyi, walking toward him. Just like the last time he saw her, Ling Yiyi was wearing a fiery-red cheongsam. Her hair was bundled up behind her head in a way that accentuated her tall figure.

Pausing, Bai Yunfei said, "Sister, Ling, I came to—"

"Oh, I know, you came to find junior Tang, didn't you?" Before Bai Yunfei could even finish speaking, Ling Yiyi was already chuckling. "If I can say something, Yunfei. If you keep coming to see her, it's only going to take longer for her to fully recover..."

"Uh... that... I..." An embarrassed stutter came forth.

"Haha, just joking with you. Every time you come, junior Tang can hardly contain her excitement." Covering her laughter with her hand, Ling Yiyi continued, "When I was leaving, she was already looking around for someone. You came a little late today, I see..."

"Ah?" Surprised by this, Bai Yunfei was just about to ask if it was true when he saw the teasing look in her eyes. Realizing that it was just a joke, he teased, "Judging by how you're dressed, did you invite someone today as well? Come to think of it, I just passed by

Zhiqiu a while back. He looked like he was waiting for someone. Are you late as well?”

“Ah! Really? I could’ve sworn we planned to meet at eig—” Thrown into a momentary fit of confusion, Ling Yiyi immediately grew angry when she realized what Bai Yunfei was doing. “Yunfei! You’re always making fun of me! Let’s see how you like it if I say something bad about you to junior Tang!”

“Haha, you should go find Zhiqiu or else he’ll wait himself into a nervous wreck. We can talk another time, sister Ling!” Bai Yunfei laughed as he walked past the red-faced Ling Yiyi and headed up the mountain.

.....

When he arrived at the courtyard of Tang Xinyun, he could see her sitting on top of a boulder as she looked down at the scenery below.

“Xinyun, what brings you out here?” Bai Yunfei asked. Judging from her current state of sluggishness, Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but think, “Was she really waiting for me?”

“You’re here, Yunfei.” Not surprised by his arrival, Tang Xinyun turned to smile at him. Brushing aside the strands of hair on her face, she said, “I felt tired from training, so I decided to take a break and feel the breeze.”

“I see...” Knowing that she wasn’t waiting for him, Bai Yunfei felt the small sliver of hope in him die out. “How goes your healing? Is the corrosive energy trying to start another outbreak?”

“Not at all.” She shook her head with a smile. “It’s been going well. Even master is surprised by how quickly the corrosive energy is being purged. This morning, master looked it over and said that it should take only a few months before it’s finally gone at my current rate.”

“Really? That’s great!” Elated, Bai Yunfei took out one of the

pendants he had upgraded yesterday, “Xinyun, wear this and...”

In the sunlight, the leaf-shaped pendant in Bai Yunfei’s hand seemed to sway somewhat. Tang Xinyun was taken aback for a second before her face grew red, “Yunfei... what do you mean by giving me this gift?”

The shyful appearance of the woman caused Bai Yunfei’s heart to skip a beat. “You misunderstand. I didn’t mean anything like that, Xinyun... this pendant will help you recover soulforce...”

“What?” She didn’t understand at first, but then her eyes lit up in realization, “Oh! Could this pendant also...?”

“Yes.” Bai Yunfei nodded. “I upgraded this last night. It’ll help you recover your soulforce 3% faster than before. It’s a little on the low side, but there should still be an effect. Xinyun, you should find your health getting better even faster than before with this.”

A flash of joy registered in her eyes. Taking the pendant, Tang Xinyun tilted her head to look up at Bai Yunfei, “Yunfei... thank you.”

Her eyes were as clear as the water from a pure spring. They were entrancing, and Bai Yunfei found himself practically immersed within them.

He could feel his face grow hot, and when he did, he let out a hurried reply, “There’s no need to thank me, Xinyun. Just hurry up and put it on...”

“Alright.” The smallest of smiles could be seen forming on her lips. Both hands clasped on one side of the pendant as she brought it around her neck. When it was attached, she pulled her hair out of the newly-formed circle. Then, with a reddening face, she slipped the pendant into the folds of her robes and out of sight.

“Ahem!” Bai Yunfei coughed twice in embarrassment before turning to look at the surrounding scenery...

“Oh, Yunfei. How is your essence fireseed coming along?”

Bai Yunfei turned back around. Tang Xinyun was by his side, looking at the clouds in the sky. Due to her close proximity, the delicate aroma of her scent wafted up to his nose, providing a calming sensation.

“Haha, don’t worry. There’s no problems so far. The Cataclysmic Seal is helping my essence fireseed recover, so I’m sure it won’t be too long before it fully recovers.”

He actually didn’t know how much longer it’d take for a full recovery. It went without saying that this couldn’t be said, unless he wanted to worry Tang Xinyun even more.

“Really? That’s good to hear...” A smile grew on her face. “Your recovery rate is really something. Your talent for training and crafting is something the ex-headmaster Zi Jin keeps praising. Even my master said that you’re likely to become the best student in the last few hundred years, Jiang Fan included! If you couldn’t recover from your wounds, the Crafting School would’ve lost an incredible person. You can continue training and crafting, that’s great...”

She really was happy for Bai Yunfei, but her own feelings of sorrow were still noticeable to him. Clearly, she was feeling unhappy about the fact that she was unable to make a complete recovery...

Though his heart was stabbed yet again, Bai Yunfei smiled. “Haha... yeah. My situation is a bit special. That's how we found a way to help me recover, but don’t worry, Xinyun, I’ll definitely find a way to help you continue training in elemental fire!”

Tang Xinyun smiled, “Don’t worry, Yunfei, I feel fine... you can’t force something like this. My essence fireseed is gone, and trying to train in elemental fire is easier said than done... Master said that there were a few special ways to help me, but everything requires me being a Soul Ancestor. I’ve already accepted this.

“Maybe it’s fate... I’ll never be able to train in elemental fire or learn how to craft...”

She spoke of acceptance, but her voice sounded more and more dispirited with each word.

“It won’t be like that!” Bai Yunfei hurried to comfort her, “There’s no such thing as a predestined fate! Xinyun, don’t worry. I promise you. I’ll definitely find a way to reform your essence fireseed. I’ll definitely do it! I promise!!”

Tang Xinyun had given up already, but Bai Yunfei’s words were spoken with enough emotion that she couldn’t help but feel a tad bit more hopeful. “Yunfei,” she smiled, “you don’t have to worry about me. Focus on getting better, really, I’m fine... Master said that the headmaster’s daughter will be coming back from the Water School in a while. I’ve... I’ve thought about it already. When she comes back... I... I’ll be going with her to enter the Water School...”

For some reason, Bai Yunfei found himself at a loss. He took a deep breath to calm down, and then looked back at Tang Xinyun’s eyes. “Xinyun, I’ll get better as soon as I can. After that, I’ll find a way to help you reform your essence fireseed! Don’t give up! Even if you can’t recover it, another one can be formed! You can tr—eh? Hold on...”

He was motivating himself by talking to Tang Xinyun, but halfway through, a sudden idea struck him, causing him to stop there to think with a heavy expression.

Confused, Tang Xinyun asked, “Yunfei, what’s wrong?”

“Ah? Oh! It’s... it’s nothing. I just thought about something, that’s all.” Realizing where he was, Bai Yunfei shook his head with a start. “In short, Xinyun, you’re thinking about too many things. Focus on getting better first. The other matters can wait.”

“Yes. Yunfei, you too. Hurry up and get better...”

.....

The two talked for some time before Bai Yunfei finally decided to head out. Waving goodbye, he started down the mountain to walk home.

When he got to the crossroads connecting the mountain points, he stopped. Turning his head to the Eastern Point, he looked up with a bright look of excitement.

“Can that be done? If it could... then I’ll be making an extremely large leap in strength!”

Chapter 282: A Legend

“What did you say!?”

The apparent silence in the courtyard was shattered by Zi Jin’s voice. He was a reclusive existence that the students of the current generation regarded as a man of legend. The Zi Jin of today was far more outspoken than the one from half a year ago. Specifically, he was more susceptible to shouting out loud, like he was right now.

Looking at Bai Yunfei right in front of him, Zi Jin asked again, “Yunfei, what did you just say?”

Bai Yunfei nodded, “Master, I said that I want to form a second essence fireseed!!” He repeated.

“...” Zi Jin stared at Bai Yunfei for a long while as if in disbelief at what he was hearing. “Yunfei, what made you think about such a thing?”

“Master, I know this idea is a little preposterous, but I’m not daydreaming. Master, you’ve said it before, my situation is unique. My essence fireseed has not disappeared even after being outside of my body for a long time. This has never been seen before. Aside from the connection between it and I, my body does not have a single bit of elemental fire in it. I’m unable to control it, and it doesn’t affect me. If the essence fireseed disappears, I won’t feel anything, so my guess is if I can form a second essence fireseed, wouldn’t I have double the strength when the one in my Cataclysmic Seal fully heals?”

“Aren’t you still daydreaming?” Zi Jin sighed to himself. What Bai Yunfei was saying left him deep in thought.

Bai Yunfei felt nervous seeing his master silent like this. “Master... do you think this idea is feasible?”

Zi Jin’s eyebrows narrowed together as a sign of him thinking even harder. After a while, his eyes lit up in realization, “Yunfei. I

cannot say for certain, but you may very well be able to!”

It was an unexpected answer, but Bai Yunfei was happy to hear it, “It really can be done!? Two essence fireseed can be formed!?”

“No. I’ve never heard of anyone being able to have two essence origin of the same element...” Zi Jin shook his head. When he saw the confused look on Bai Yunfei’s face, Zi Jin explained, “But, a similar situation was once told before. I haven’t seen it myself, but there was a person that had reached a similar situation like this over a thousand years ago in our school.”

“A similar situation? What was that?”

“He hadn’t two essence origins, but rather... a companion seed! That person was able to form a companion fireseed!”

“Companion fireseed?” He had never heard of such a thing before.

Zi Jin nodded. “Correct, like how the moon and the stars rotate around each other, the essence fireseed experiences something similar.”

Knowing that Zi Jin would need to be more specific due to Bai Yunfei’s confusion, he continued, “As you are aware, soul cultivators are not limited to any one element. Unless one is talented or strong, having a duality in elements isn’t worth the effort. One might not even have the chance to manipulate a second element, but when the strong maximize the potential of their main element, they may choose to cultivate a second element. By training in an element that complements their first, the power of both elements will get stronger.”

Zi Jin paused here to lift his right hand up. Above his palm, a greenish energy floated into the air. “I, for example, trained in elemental wood after elemental fire. Wood gives birth to fire, and elemental wood supplements elemental fire making it stronger. This is the path many of us crafters walk later in life. Of course,

there are a few that choose to take another element.”

Dispersing the elemental wood, Zi Jin continued, “It goes without saying that geniuses like Zhiqiu, who have a duality of wood and fire since the beginning, are much better off than others. It’s an advantage for them and easier to work with. Whatever achievements they achieve later certainly won’t be unknown. That is what it means to have talent. Skill can be achieved with hard work, talent cannot.”

His face grew stern, “Many soul cultivators are capable of training in a second element, but for all intents and purpose, any one element can’t be ‘split’ apart. It’ll disappear and reform right away.

“There is, however, a very special circumstance that requires equally special conditions. If the essence origin takes in too much of the element it can handle, there is a chance that it can form a companion seed.

“It isn’t an essence origin but it ‘accompanies’ the essence origin. The companion seed is far weaker than the essence origin!

“But there is an exception. If an essence woodseed increases the strength of an essence fireseed twofold, then a companion fireseed will increase the essence fireseed by tenfold or even more!!

“Only a few have managed to form a companion seed over the course of history, but every single one of them were men of their generation and masters of their century!

“It is said that the founder of the Tianhun Empire, Wu Tianhun, had five companion seeds! He was a paragon of might and invincible in his time!”

“.....”

Bai Yunfei found himself grow extremely excited after listening to Zi Jin, “Master, then are you saying it’s possible... I can form a companion fireseed!?”

“I cannot guarantee that.” Zi Jin shook his head with a sigh. “But I’m sure that in your current situation, having one form is extremely likely!”

Zi Jin was extremely excited by this. How could he not be. In the past, he had been constantly worrying about how to heal Bai Yunfei’s weakened essence fireseed without considering anything else. The companion fireseed was... something from the legends. If Bai Yunfei could really form one, his potential would be limitless!

A gleeful look of expectation flashed across Bai Yunfei’s eyes. “Master... if I’m unable to absorb elemental fire, what should I do if I wish to form a companion fireseed?”

Zi Jin thought about the question for a moment before replying, “Your current situation is extremely unique. As you are right now, your essence fireseed bears no influence on you. That means you can continue as if you’ve never had an essence fireseed to begin with and try to absorb elemental fire again. You can try to form a second essence fireseed. My guess is that even if you form a second one, the moment your first one is called back to your body, it will absorb the second one to strengthen itself. If by chance it doesn’t, then it’ll become a companion fireseed!

“But that is only my speculation. Whatever the case, there are two outcomes with the first outcome being more likely. The second outcome is less likely to happen.

“Furthermore, this requires the essence fireseed in your Cataclysmic Seal to fully recover first. That by itself is a difficult situation. As your master... I will try to find a way to help you. Even if it’s only a chance or if it requires the entirety of our schools medicine, your master will help you form a companion fireseed!!”

Chapter 283: Reforming the Essence Fireseed!

“Boom!!”

An earth-shaking explosion erupted from the Northern Point of the Crafting School. It was so loud that every student heard it. Turning their heads to the source, they could all see a pillar of flames jettison into the heavens. The pillar evaporated any nearby clouds, and its intentions seemed like it wanted to bridge the earth and the heavens together.

This pillar of flames originated from the Northern Point, and at the source of this pillar was a cave.

The sleek ground around the pillar was ten meters long and wide. There were a series of lines and marks dug into the ground, forming an extremely complicated looking array. The inscriptions in the array glowed a bright red hue from the primal stones placed everywhere. The primal stones flashed and twinkled, and the array resembled a red version of the night sky with multiple stars blinking often. There had to be several hundred fire primal stones. At a glance, the lowest quality ones were of the mid-grade. The majority of them were the rarely seen high-grade ones.

And at the pivotal points of the arrays, there were a few primal stones that shined even brighter. They were superior-grade fire primal stones!!

At the center of the array was the pillar. It was two meters in diameter and was extremely bright. It looked as if the array was feeding the pillar a nearly unlimited amount of power.

Within the scorching-hot pillar, a single figure could be seen sitting inside!!

“Yunfei!!”

A woman cried out. From beyond the pillar, a group of people

could be seen staring at it. An orange light was protecting the group from being burned by the fierce elemental fire.

The one who had shouted out loud had been a pale-faced Tang Xinyun. She was concerned about Bai Yunfei's fate, and if Cang Yu had not grabbed ahold of her hand, Tang Xinyun would've already charged for the pillar.

A feeling of unease welled up inside of her. The sight of the person inside the pillar proved far too much for her to bear any longer; turning to Zi Jin, who was in front of her, she pleaded, "Senior headmaster... Yunfei can't hold out any longer! Please save him! There's not enough time!!"

From where he stood, Zi Jin was completely still. When the words of Tang Xinyun reached him, a feeling of worry and regret flashed in his eyes, "Alas... it looks like this attempt didn't work..."

.....

Bai Yunfei sat in the center of the pillar of flames. His eyebrows were knit together, his teeth were grit, and his face was scrunched up in great pain. The heat of the fire was the hottest on the left side of his chest where his heart was. Right there, a small fist-sized fireball blew apart as if failing to hold together.

The most shocking thing was that Bai Yunfei's face had several cracks running through it! Like century-old dirt, there were crevices going everywhere down his body as if threatening to split apart!

Liquid blood did not come out of the cracks. Instead, a vapor trail of evaporated blood came out in its place.

"Dammit dammit dammit!! Calm down!!" Bai Yunfei practically howled. His body felt as if a gale was tearing him apart with how he was losing control of the elemental fire. Even his soul felt as if it was being ignited from all the heat, but he was loathed to give up now.

“Am I still unable to do it? Why? Why is this happening...”

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After Bai Yunfei thought of the idea to form a second essence fireseed and had earned Zi Jin’s approval, he had spent all of his time training and preparing. Aside from the periods of time where he’d go see Tang Xinyun or when he’d upgrade several accessories at night, he’d spend the rest of his time trying to feel for the elemental fire around him.

Right now, he had the soulforce expected of a Soul Ancestor, but since no element could be felt in his body, Bai Yunfei would look like a Soul Warrior if he didn’t release his soulforce. Though he tried to absorb the elemental fire around him, Bai Yunfei was unable to do so; there was no longer a ‘connection’ like before.

It was during that time that Bai Yunfei realized he had an extremely ‘close’ relationship with elemental lightning. In fact, he could very easily form an essence lightningseed if he wanted since his affinity for it was just as good as his affinity for fire.

But that wasn’t what Bai Yunfei wanted. He wanted to focus on absorbing elemental fire, and he had tried so many different methods to accomplish that goal. The Fire-tipped Spear, the Flameblade Bracer, the Ardent Sun Glove, and even other pieces of equipment that could help him with elemental fire were used to experiment. The one with the biggest results had been the Cataclysmic Seal, but he didn’t dare use it in case something hampered the recovery of his essence fireseed.

Half a month later, all of the spirit boosting accessories he owned had been fully upgraded. Although none of them gained an effect of granting soulforce recovery, there was no need to worry since Tang Xinyun was progressing fast enough on her own. Bai Yunfei was loathed to part with his +12 equipment, so he didn’t bother upgrading those. He also didn’t bother to find any more

accessories. Instead, he focused completely on training.

Day by day, time slipped by as Bai Yunfei failed to make any progress with elemental fire. His essence fireseed was still slowly improving, but Bai Yunfei was hoping that the recovery effort would slow down. The essence fireseed would return to his body when it was fully healed, and he wouldn't be able to attempt to form another essence fireseed if that happened.

What Bai Yunfei wished was only just a thought. A thought couldn't impede the recovery of his essence fireseed, so he tried his best to absorb as much elemental fire as he could before his essence fireseed could recover.

Zi Jin was busy himself. His waking hours were spent pouring over the records within the archives of the school in search of any pertinent information on companion fireseeds. The procurement of the necessary ingredients and primal stone were managed by him so that Bai Yunfei wouldn't have to do it.

He knew that if Bai Yunfei were to try to manage everything himself, there was no way to reach his goals. A special case like Bai Yunfei required special methods.

In fact, Zi Jin was more serious about the matter than Bai Yunfei since he knew just how important this opportunity was.

Two months later...

Bai Yunfei wanted to absorb as much elemental fire as he could, but it simply couldn't be done. Not a single bit of elemental fire could be found in his body, but the essence fireseed in his Cataclysmic Seal had already recuperated more than halfway. Bai Yunfei asked Zi Jin for assistance because of his impatience.

For three whole days, Zi Jin tried his best to find a way, and after the third day, he finally informed Bai Yunfei that they could only try the more special ways to attempt to make a second essence fireseed.

Today, Bai Yunfei had been extremely excited. Under the guidance of Zi Jin, they walked close to the top of the Northern Point along with the first elder Xiao Binzi, second elder Huangfu Rui, third elder Cang Yu, and fourth elder Jiang Fan. Since Tang Xinyun learned of what was happening from Cang Yu, she tagged along as well.

The group traveled up the road before finally coming to a stop ten meters away from a cave.

Aside from the excessive width of the cave, there was nothing special about it. The moment they walked in, Bai Yunfei saw a ten-meter-wide array drawn on the ground with a myriad of fire primal stones laid at center points all over it. The primal stones exuded a bright crimson glow everywhere since there were so many.

Only one glance was needed for Bai Yunfei to determine that the worth of the primal stones was definitely not low. However much they were worth, Bai Yunfei didn't know, but that was natural. His eyes weren't sharp enough to discern their true worth.

It was because of this inability that Bai Yunfei didn't know that several of these stones was enough to keep a small school running for over a century...

The sight of the primal stones was shocking to the elders who did know their worth.

"Yunfei, this array is called the Flame Gathering Formation. Your master will be using this today to help you form an essence fireseed. It'll help you focus and gather the elemental fire around you at a faster rate, and it will also help you absorb it."

Bai Yunfei was surprised to hear of such a thing. It was the first that he'd even heard of a 'formation' before. It was a topic that was completely untouched by him, so it went without saying that he didn't understand it.

Now wasn't the time to try and learn the art though. Nodding his head, Bai Yunfei followed Zi Jin's instructions, and he sat down at the very center of the array.

As soon as he stepped within the boundary of the formation, Bai Yunfei felt the space around him 'stick' to him. A rich miasma of elemental fire pooled around him, and he could feel each breath travel into his abdomen.

Outside, Zi Jin shook his hand to retrieve something from his space ring. It was a type of drug.

Handing it to Bai Yunfei, Zi Jin said, "Yunfei, take this when I say so. You'll feel it taking effect straight away. That's when you will try to form your essence fireseed with the elemental fire in here.

"You won't need to worry about anything else. I will stand by the side and watch for any danger. Should it come, I'll be there to lend you aid. All you need to do is focus on forming an essence fireseed." Zi Jin warned.

"Don't worry, master. Your student will work hard to live up to your expectations!" Bai Yunfei bowed.

"Very well." Nodding, Zi Jin had everyone else stand twenty meters away. "You may... begin!"

"Yes!"

Raising his left hand, Bai Yunfei took a swift look at the grape-sized red pill in his hand in determination.

"Success or failure, it all depends on this... no matter what happens, I have to form a second essence fireseed!!"

Chapter 284: Difficulties

Under the eyes of Zi Jin and everyone else, Bai Yunfei swallowed the red pill before then stuffing a jade-green piece of leaf into his mouth.

As soon as the pill entered his stomach, Bai Yunfei felt as if a fireball had dropped down his throat. From his tongue to his stomach, his entire body felt as if it was being burned alive.

So excruciating was the pain that Bai Yunfei couldn't help but let out a slight grunt. His entire body was wet with sweat, but even that was unable to help with the burning sensation he was feeling. The leaf that was in his mouth was meant to reduce the heating effect, so when it entered his stomach after the pill, the pain noticeably lessened despite the flame growing larger.

"Whew..." He hissed. A white stream of vapor exuded forth from his mouth. Closing his eyes and pursing his lips, Bai Yunfei started to try and guide the burning elemental fire in his body around like Zi Jin instructed.

From far away, Zi Jin nodded his head in approval at Bai Yunfei's actions. Waving his right hand, four beams of elemental fire shot forth and embedded themselves into the four superior-grade fire primal stones around Bai Yunfei.

"Brr..."

A shockwave of sound kicked up all of the dust around Bai Yunfei as the fire primal stones started to shine. The grooves in the ground started to glow from the energy traveling through them, and soon enough, the entire formation was lit up.

The Flame Gathering Formation was now activated.

An immeasurable amount of elemental fire began to gather in the formation. There was an invisible line that contained the flames in a dome-shaped figure above Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei could barely feel the elemental fire around him grow thicker and richer. It almost felt as if he had been submerged in water, but if he were to try and open his mouth, all he'd take in would be elemental fire.

The pill he had eaten helped him take in the elemental fire while the Flame Gathering Formation gathered elemental fire for him to take in. With the added help from both, Bai Yunfei's attempt to absorb the elemental fire was far easier than before. Ecstatic, Bai Yunfei quickly tried his best to absorb it into his skin and blood vessels.

Bai Yunfei needed to absorb enough elemental fire to return to that initial state of carefreeness he had before, but after ten minutes of trying, the pill had been fully digested. Stuffing an ear of red wheat into his mouth, Bai Yunfei felt sad—if only the art of alchemy was still alive. If he had one of the pills made from such a mystical art, he wouldn't have to struggle like he was a cow chewing grass.

It was only just a hope. If he could make himself stronger by chewing grass like this, then chew grass he would.

As time went on, the pile of medicine Bai Yunfei had in front of him grew smaller and smaller. In the end, all of it had been completely used up. Bai Yunfei continued to try his best to absorb the elemental fire even as he complained about the taste of the medicine. What he didn't know was that the worth and importance of each of these medicines would've been enough to drive the average soul cultivator mad with want.

The more elemental fire in his body, the more excited Bai Yunfei felt. As long as he could absorb just a little more, he'd be able to form a new essence fireseed.

The most optimal time for this to be done was arriving when the first obstacle came crashing into him. All of the medicines he had eaten were starting to overwhelm him with their side-effects. Even

though Zi Jin had warned Bai Yunfei to be careful, he was still caught off guard by the knife-peeling sensation that was happening all over his body.

He wanted to scream, but somehow, the howls of pain died in his throat. To do so here and now would be to fail this attempt of absorbing elemental fire.

A section of elemental fire had been lost to him, but it was only a small fraction. Gnashing his teeth in pain, Bai Yunfei used his soulforce to act as a 'guide' for the elemental fire, directing it through his body rather than let it go rampant.

"I can't keep on going... but I have to form the essence fireseed!" Having kept track of his soulforce, Bai Yunfei knew that he couldn't continue for much longer. Grunting, both of his hands formed a hand seal in front of him. This was the 'orthodox' hand seal Zi Jin had taught him to do when forming the essence fireseed. With this hand seal, the elemental fire would be able to make a successful loop and increase the chance of forming an essence fireseed.

The elemental fire within his body started to turn to the center of his body and compress in on itself in the acupoint, the place where the essence fireseed would form.

Saying that the essence fireseed was nothing more than a mass of elemental fire compressed to its limits would be an oversimplification of the matter. The acupoint, where the essence fireseed was being formed, would force the elemental fire to undergo countless cycles of refinement before becoming an essence fireseed.

Even if someone didn't know the normal method of guiding elemental fire through their body, any late-stage Soul Warrior could still form an essence fireseed by intuition.

Bai Yunfei had done the same when he became a Soul Sprite.

The situation Bai Yunfei was in today was quite different; it required complete control over the entirety of the elemental fire around him for it to succeed. Since his advancement to the Soul Sprite realm had been unique, Bai Yunfei didn't exactly 'experience' forming an essence fireseed.

That being said, this situation would be extremely trying for him.

“Bang!”

As the elemental fire started to gather together, the surrounding elemental fire started to react to the new presence as well. A brilliant flash of red light was formed as a small disk-sized fire appeared in front of Bai Yunfei's chest. Elemental fire drew in close as if being summoned by a need to be absorbed into him.

“It's starting!!”

Zi Jin's eyes lit up with excitement. His right hand flew up as yet another burst of elemental fire shot into the Flame Gathering Formation. The countless primal stones started to flash even faster now as the elemental fire in the area grew thicker.

The people behind Zi Jin concentrated heavily on Bai Yunfei, all of them wore expectant looks.

“Yunfei, you have to succeed. You can't let things go wrong...” Tang Xinyun bit her lower lip. Both of her hands were clenching her robes as she looked on in worry and concern.

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The pain that was stabbing at Bai Yunfei's heart was almost enough to make him faint. His hands were visibly trembling, but he didn't dare move. He was at a critical part of compressing the elemental fire; he just needed a little more before the essence fireseed would be formed.

It was only just a small distance to cross, but the step needed to cross it may as well have been the step needed to ascend the heavens.

“Hnrgh!”

A fierce pain stabbed into his heart.

His grunt had only taken a moment to form, but it took long enough that his concentration was slightly interrupted, causing the almost formed essence fireseed to start unraveling!!

“Bang!” Like a chain reaction, the fire around the outermost parts of his body started to dissipate as well. Almost as if the fuse to a bomb had been lit, the elemental fire around him started to ignite!

With all of the elemental fire starting to dissipate and ignite, Bai Yunfei felt the color in his face bleed away.

Following that, a mouthful of blood sprayed out from his mouth before immediately being evaporated from the heat.

Zi Jin’s face fell. He prepared to charge in to save Bai Yunfei; the signs that were showing up all pointed to a failed attempt at forming an essence fireseed.

“Master, don’t come in!!”

Bai Yunfei’s voice called out from within the fire. “I... I can still do it! Let me try again!!”

Zi Jin had only taken half a step. He hesitated for two seconds, but his decision was made.

He fell back.

Biting the tip of his tongue to snap himself out of his pain, Bai Yunfei sucked in a deep breath of air. Following the flow of soulforce, he began to realign the elemental fire in him and renew the process to gather and compress it. The fire that was around him started to flicker slightly before moving back into his body.

Beadlets of sweat dripped down his face before evaporating into the fire. The intense elemental fire was beginning to compress within the acupoints responsible for reforming the essence

fireseed.

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“Bang...”

The flames fell apart again.

This was the third failure. The third time Bai Yunfei had spat out a mouthful of blood.

With bloodshot eyes, Bai Yunfei stared at the ring of fire around him; though he was in pain, his eyes remained as determined as ever.

There was no hesitation as he began the fourth attempt. All of the sweat that had been on his face was gone, but the tiniest of cracks could be seen now.

When the essence fireseed was about the size of a quail’s egg...

“This is it... the final push!!”

He bit his lower lip. The Violet Soul Ring on his right hand started to glow as the stockpiled two-thousand soulforce began to enter his body.

Refueled, Bai Yunfei started to use this new source of soulforce to compress the elemental fire with all he had!!

Chapter 285: The Final Conclusion

Now that Bai Yunfei had two-thousand soulforce for the final fight, the elemental fire within the origin acupoint was compressing to half its original size with barely any of it escaping.

The fire outside of Bai Yunfei's body was starting to shrink to the size of a quail's egg, and by now, it was halfway in his body!

During the moment of elation...

“Blip...”

Like a bubble being popped, the nearly formed essence fireseed was disrupted!

The partially embedded fireball outside Bai Yunfei's body was rejected, and as soon as it was completely out of his body, it exploded!

This time, the elemental fire that was within his acupoint ballooned over ten times more than before!!

“Boom!!”

An unprecedented level of light exploded from the Flame Gathering Formation as a pillar of fire shot into the air. It blasted apart the roof of the cave and headed into the sky!!

With an exponential amount of elemental fire bursting out, the cave around Bai Yunfei started to crackle. Fractures appeared all over its surface, and when the fire slammed into the walls, Xiao Binzi immediately realized the danger.

His right hand flew up and an orange pearl was thrown overhead. It then enveloped the group in an orange light, protecting them from the elemental fire.

“Yunfei!!”

It took a moment before Tang Xinyun could fully respond. With a frightened cry, she tried to run toward Bai Yunfei, but before she

could, Cang Yu grabbed ahold of her.

A feeling of unease welled up inside of her. The sight of the person inside the pillar proved far too much for her to bear any longer; turning to Zi Jin, who was in front of her, she pleaded, “Senior headmaster... Yunfei can’t hold out any longer! Please save him! There’s not enough time!!”

From where he stood, Zi Jin was completely still. When the words of Tang Xinyun reached him, a feeling of worry and regret flashed across his eyes, “Alas... it looks like this attempt didn’t work...”

He wanted to help Bai Yunfei since his first failure, but Bai Yunfei had been so determined to make it work that the fourth attempt was already at hand. That much alone was enough to make Zi Jin admire Bai Yunfei’s tenacity. He had also hoped that Bai Yunfei would surprise him once more.

But it didn’t look like that would happen any more. Bai Yunfei had failed again, and the Flame Gathering Formation was in a flux. If he didn’t step in now, Bai Yunfei’s life may very well be in danger.

Right as he was about to step in, however, something surprising happened!

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The instant the elemental fire exploded, Bai Yunfei felt as if his entire body was about to shatter apart. His mind went blank for a small second, but the pain was enough to anchor him back to reality. Not a single inch of his entire body was not in pain!

There was an odd-red color around his body where the cracks were forming. It wasn’t blood that was leaking out, but a red mist.

“Dammit dammit dammit!! Calm down!!” Bai Yunfei practically howled. His body felt as if a gale was tearing it apart with how he was losing control of the elemental fire. Even his soul felt as if it

was being ignited from all the heat, but he was loath to give up now.

“Am I still unable to do it? Why? Why is this happening...

“I had an extremely rare chance with so many preparations in place. So many primal stones and medicines were used, and even then, I still couldn’t do it? I was still reduced to this sad state...?” Knowing that nothing could be done to redeem the situation, Bai Yunfei’s mouth was filled with the bitter taste of agonizing defeat.

He didn’t want to give up, but he had nothing to go on with.

He also knew that Zi Jin would save him no matter what, so even if he was about to be torn apart by the fire around him, he wasn’t particularly worried. Still if he squandered this chance, there would be no time for a second.

Already, Bai Yunfei’s mind was starting to grow hazy. When he looked up at the nearby fire, he could practically feel it solidifying around him.

But then...

A heart-pounding throb ran through his body as if his heart was sending him some sort of blessing. With renewed vigor, Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up, and his right hand shook slightly as a flash of light flew out.

The Cataclysmic Seal!!

“Brrrr!!”

The instant the Cataclysmic Seal appeared, it gave a shiver as if excited to be there. Floating above Bai Yunfei’s head, the brick started to spin.

For an array as large as this one, a small brick was something it could overlook, but when the brick started to move about, all of the fire was effected.

Soon enough, a whirlpool of flames was created, and at the

center of it all was the Cataclysmic Seal!

“Whew...”

Under the amazed eyes of Zi Jin and everyone else, the flames spiraled around the Cataclysmic Seal before shrinking to be absorbed into it!

As the array started to glow brilliantly with light, the elemental fire inside started to flow into the Cataclysmic Seal!

“Crack.” There was the sound of something cracking.

One of the primal stones now had a crack running through it.

Then, like a chain reaction, a series of cracks could be heard as the other primal stones started to shatter as well.

The Cataclysmic Seal may as well been a bottomless pit. In a short few moments, all of the elemental fire in the array was sucked into it, causing the entire cave to darken. With the absence of light, nothing could be seen, and the remaining primal stones were all reduced to ashes!

In the cave, the only thing that radiated any light was the Cataclysmic Seal, and right underneath it, Bai Yunfei could be seen lying on the ground.

.....

“.....”

Silence reigned through the cave as everyone looked at him in confusion. Not a single one of them knew what to do.

“Yunfei!!”

The first person to move was Tang Xinyun. With a shout, she ran to where Bai Yunfei was without hesitation. When she lifted him up, she could see steam floating out of his body from the many cracks on him.

In a flash, Zi Jin appeared right next to her. Grabbing hold of Bai

Yunfei's right arm, he began to inspect his body.

“Yunfei... Yunfei! Are you okay!? Please, wake up!” The steaming shape that Bai Yunfei was in had startled Tang Xinyun. Panicked and with eyes brimming with tears, she looked to Zi Jin, “Senior headmaster, what’s happening to Yunfei? You have to save him!”

Stooping down, Cang Yu clasped a gentle hand on Tang Xinyun's shoulder. “Xinyun, don't worry. Yunfei won't be in any danger with the previous headmaster here.”

“But... Yunfei is...” Already, Tang Xinyun felt her throat constrict with emotions. Turning her head back to Cang Yu, Tang Xinyun's eyes were completely stricken with worry.

It was then that Zi Jin pulled his hand away from Bai Yunfei's right shoulder. “Worry not, Yunfei is fine. He has suffered many physical wounds, but nothing time won't fix...”

Seeing Tang Xinyun wipe gently at the many wounds on Bai Yunfei's face, Zi Jin could only sigh and shake his head. He turned back to look at the Cataclysmic Seal above Bai Yunfei with a look of wonder.

The Cataclysmic Seal let loose several flashes of light before falling with a thud right next to Bai Yunfei's side. Devoid of color now, it looked like a normal brick...

.....

This attempt to form a second essence fireseed had squandered several hundred fire primal stones and countless of precious medicines.

In the end, it was a complete failure.

When Bai Yunfei was brought back to his room, no one knew when he'd wake up. The elemental fire had left a number of wounds all over his body, and it continued to burn him. Streams of steam could still be seen rising from Bai Yunfei's body—much to the shock of many.

It was a stretch to say he was in danger, but Bai Yunfei clearly was in a very weakened state. That was why even Zi Jin was hesitant to try and do anything. Right now, only Bai Yunfei himself could try to recover.

It was fortunate that he had armor that helped speed up the recovery process, so within half a day, the elemental fire died down to a gradual lull and the wounds around his body stopped bleeding. They finally started the healing process.

With Bai Yunfei's recovery speed and the added assistance of his equipment, a full recovery would not take long.

But a question remained to be answered. Would this failure to form the essence fireseed have any lasting effect on him?

And the Cataclysmic Seal. After absorbing the elemental fire, even if it was only for a short amount of time, would it change the essence fireseed within it?

Chapter 286: What to Do?

“Bang!”

There was an explosion first. Then, a wave of smoke filled the area.

“Co-cough! Blegh!” A violent coughing fit followed after.

There was the sound of wind being displaced before a person, waving a fan to blow the smoke out his window, could be seen. Rubbing violently at his face and dusting himself off, the man spat out several globs of ash-filled spit.

Beyond the soot layering was the face of... Bai Yunfei!!

“Ugh, another failure...” Sighing as he stared at the blackened object in his hand, Bai Yunfei stored the broken fragments back into his space ring.

“This is hard... it’s been five days already, but I haven’t succeeded even once. I’m scared to even think about the quality even if I succeeded...” Bai Yunfei rubbed his chin in contemplation. Since some ash was stuck to his fingers, his chin looked as if he had a beard, making for a comedic sight.

“Am I using the wrong materials?” Bai Yunfei thought to himself. “The crafting process was very clear though. That means my control wasn’t good enough... the flames from the Ardent Sun Glove are really hard to control. If this was before, I’d be able to craft stuff like this without a problem...”

“Ugh!!!”

Just thinking about the situation was enough for Bai Yunfei to let out a frustrated groan.

He waved his right hand to bring out some more materials, but when there was no reaction, he looked surprised, “Eh? I ran out?”

“This can’t be! I need to finish before tomorrow night! I’m

already so close. I have to finish by tonight!!”

He nodded his head in determination and looked around before walking out of his room.

Opening the doors, Bai Yunfei was met with the sight of a large group of people outside. At the very front of this group was Si Kongxian. Upon seeing Bai Yunfei walk out, the look of worry on his face turned to joy before then reverting back to worry, “You finally came out, Yunfei!! If it took you any longer, I’d have the other seniors drag you out!!”

“Uh...” Bai Yunfei had no idea how to react to that. Looking up to the sky, he began to apologetically reply, “Sorry about that, I didn’t realize what time it was.”

“Haha, don’t worry then. It’s a good thing you came out now.” With a laugh, Si Kongxian shook Bai Yunfei’s hand, but when he saw Bai Yunfei’s soot-covered face, Si Kongxian couldn’t help but stare strangely at him.

“Ah, Kongxian, I’m running out of materials. Could you do me a favor and get me some more of what I need? I need them before tonight if that’s alright with you?”

“No problem! I had some juniors prepare some last time, so there’s still some more in store. Let me have someone send them over to you later.

“Oh? Thanks for your work, then.”

Chuckling Si Kongxian changed the subject, “Yunfei, are you going to want them right now? Those juniors are eating their meals right now...”

“Oh, no worries. Let them keep eating.” Bai Yunfei nodded apologetically.

After waving to the other people there, Bai Yunfei turned walked out of the courtyard.

Bai Yunfei could see a line of students walk into a single room one by one. Each one of them talked with one another as they walked into the room, and the sweet aroma of several plates of vegetables wafted through the air...

This place was the kitchens for the inner school students of the Western Point...

.....

Ten days had passed since Bai Yunfei had failed to form a second essence fireseed. Bai Yunfei did not wake up during the first two days.

Like Zi Jin said, Bai Yunfei had no major injuries to speak of, and it only took another two days to bring him back to full health.

Of course, 'full health' referred to the physical health on the level of a normal person. His soul was still very weak.

He was feeling a little better, but he was still afraid to do anything major. Therefore, a few more days of recuperation would be needed.

On the surface level, his failure to form a second essence fireseed had done very little damage, but the elemental fire had 'ravaged' his body. With the many medicines he had used, Bai Yunfei's body was in a weaker state than before.

While he was worse off, the same couldn't be said for the Cataclysmic Seal. After absorbing all that elemental fire, the brick seemed to have gone into 'hibernation.' Whenever Bai Yunfei took it out, he noticed that it wasn't absorbing elemental fire anymore.

It felt like an average brick with its red hue and with it being cold to the touch. If not for the fact that Bai Yunfei could still see its stats, he would've thought that it had turned back into a normal brick.

As the master of the Cataclysmic Seal, Bai Yunfei knew that there was more to it than just that. Beyond the cold exterior, a

terrifyingly powerful aura could be felt within. It was dormant, but still, it continued to compress the essence fireseed in it...

This was a great result to end up with. Even though Bai Yunfei failed to form an essence fireseed, he didn't squander all of the elemental fire; the Cataclysmic Seal had absorbed most of it.

His memory was hazy, but Bai Yunfei could still distinctly feel that the essence fireseed in the Cataclysmic Seal was a whole lot stronger than before.

There was a good chance that the essence fireseed would make a full recovery within two months.

A consolation prize, to be sure.

Still, Bai Yunfei would no longer be able to form an essence fireseed. His wounds required time he did not have and no medicine would help him here.

.....

Like after the battle in Curopia City, Bai Yunfei found himself waking up to the tender care of Tang Xinyun. Just thinking about how he had been greeted with her kind smile left Bai Yunfei with a myriad of warm feelings, as if there was a special relationship between them.

This rang especially true when he found his body wiped clean of sweat. Embarrassment didn't even fully describe how he felt.

Of course, when he found out it was Si Kongxian who cleaned him, Bai Yunfei had nearly puked out of anger and disgust.

Zi Jin and the others had been worried that Bai Yunfei would become depressed about his failures, but it had been almost the opposite. Bai Yunfei looked very cheerful when he woke up, and not once did he look like he was depressed. Hence, Zi Jin and the others were able to let out a sigh of relief. While it was true that they felt sorry that Bai Yunfei hadn't been able to form a companion fireseed, his failure didn't lower their opinion of him.

For someone in Bai Yunfei's case, being able to take advantage of his essence fireseed being in his Cataclysmic Seal to get stronger was something they all felt gratified about.

After Bai Yunfei woke from his two-day coma, he didn't bother to try and train or upgrade any equipment. Instead, he spent his time wandering around Mt. Crimson or playing with Huangfu Rui. This spoiled the young child. Every day after that she would pester him to make her a new toy.

Sometimes, he'd go to Tang Xinyun's place as well. A full recovery was all but expected now, and the corrosive energy in her was nearly gone, but even after all that corrosive energy disappeared, she'd still have the strength of a Soul Warrior.

On the outside, she didn't seem like she cared about her situation, but Bai Yunfei would sometimes see a crack in her facade and see the grief hidden behind her smile.

Therefore, Bai Yunfei would try cheer her up whenever possible; sometimes he'd even use Huangfu Rui to help brighten the mood.

Five days later Bai Yunfei stumbled across something interesting. On his way back from Huangfu Rui's, Bai Yunfei found himself listening to an interesting tidbit of information.

After thinking about it for an entire night, Bai Yunfei sought out one of the disciples from the outer school responsible for cooking. Bai Yunfei asked the disciple for several ingredients, and then after asking Si Kongxian to buy several things, he shut himself away in the kitchens.

It was a forced occupation that lasted until the morning of the second day. Bai Yunfei was so busy that he had completely forgotten what time it was. No one dared intrude on whatever he was doing, but the students who were extremely hungry were all very cross with him. Some had even looked annoyed.

But what was Bai Yunfei doing?

Find out next time.

Chapter 287: Happy Birthday!

“Yunfei, it’s already very late; what did you want from me?”

The door to Bai Yunfei’s room opened up, revealing Tang Xinyun. Upon opening the door, she realized that it was very dark since there was no lights on. By borrowing the moonlight, she was able to just barely make out something within.

From the side, Bai Yunfei beckoned Tang Xinyun in, “Haha, come on in first. It’s chilly outside.”

She was suspicious, but she entered the room anyway. “Where’s Xiao Rui? Didn’t she come here earlier?”

Though she looked around the room, Tang Xinyun saw no one around. Confused, she turned—

—right into Bai Yunfei’s face.

“Ah...”

Startled, Tang Xinyun took a step back. In her haste, her foot slipped on the ground, causing her to fall backwards.

Noticing her slip, Bai Yunfei hurriedly moved to grab hold of her. He successfully grabbed her hand and pulled her back onto her feet.

“Yu—Yunfei... what’s going on?” Somewhat panicked, Tang Xinyun tried to press an answer out of Bai Yunfei. By now, she had noticed that something was amiss, so she said, “If it’s nothing then... I’ll be going back...”

“Ah, no. I didn’t mean to do that...” Bai Yunfei scratched his head in embarrassment.

Afraid that she might think he was up to no good if he kept delaying, Bai Yunfei said, “Xinyun, I called you here because I wanted to give you something.”

“Eh?” She didn’t know how to respond to that, “Give me

something? Why?”

“Well... you’ll find out in a second.” He answered with a mysterious wink. “Xinyun, close your eyes for a moment.” He requested after thinking that Tang Xinyun had probably not yet adjusted to the darkness of the room.

“Eeeeh??” Again, Tang Xinyun didn’t know how to respond to him other than to blush. “Yunfei, you, what are you planning to do?”

A drop of sweat formed on Bai Yunfei’s forehead. “No no, don’t misunderstand me. I... look, just close your eyes. You’ll know what I mean in a second.”

Tang Xinyun stared balefully at him for a moment.

“If you say so...” She nodded.

Then, she closed her eyes.

Perhaps by coincidence, a ray of moonlight made its way through a crack in the clouds and sprinkled over the young woman’s tender, white features. They were illuminated in the moonlight, and Bai Yunfei saw her trembling eyelashes covering her closed eyes.

But her most noticeable feature was the slight red hue on her cheeks.

He was breathless for that one moment until he saw movement from Tang Xinyun’s eyes. Perhaps she was wondering when she’d be allowed to open them.

Coughing, he said, “Well then. Keep them closed for now, Xinyun. Just one... minute...”

.....

One full minute went by with Tang Xinyun in complete suspense. As a testament to her trust in Bai Yunfei, she didn’t move a single inch from her spot.

If not for that trust, she would've assumed that Bai Yunfei was up to no good.

“Alright, open your eyes now, Xinyun.”

She opened her eyes upon command.

“Aaah!”

A small cry of surprise came forth from her mouth. Right in front of her was a large circular object covered in some sort of substance that was as white as snow. All over the snowy-white layer was a variety of fruit slices and candles that were mixtures of colors.

The candles had been lit, and in the gentle breeze, they danced in the moonlight. At the very center of the object was a large character, ‘Yun.’

When it was brought out, a never-before-smelled aroma wafted into Tang Xinyun's nose, causing her to remain where she was.

What Bai Yunfei had in his hands was a large cake. Smiling in response to Tang Xinyun's shock, Bai Yunfei said, “Happy birthday, Xinyun.”

“Ahh?” Again, it took her a moment to respond, “Yunfei, how did you find out abo—”

“Happy birthday!!”

It was then that a cacophony of sounds erupted in the room, scaring Tang Xinyun so much that she leaped. Under the illumination of the multi-colored candles, she could see a new group of people surrounding her in the room.

“Heehee, sis Yun, happy birthday!!”

Huangfu Rui's hug snapped Tang Xinyun out of her stupor.

“Yo—you guys...” Tang Xinyun didn't know how to react.

Right by her side, Ling Yiyi laughed and pulled her hand. “Junior Tang, we know it's your birthday, and we are here to celebrate it.”

“Yeah yeah! I was the one who told brother strawhat! He said he wanted to surprise sis Yun, so we got all this ready!” Huangfu Rui pumped a fist into the air, “Dai Dai cut all of the paper ribbons here!”

Lian Lingmin strode forward as well, “Haha, happy birthday, Xinyun.”

Ye Zhiqiu nodded his head, “Happy birthday.”

“Happy birthday, sis Tang!” Mo Xiaoxuan laughed.

“Happy birthday, junior Tang.” Song Lin commented.

“Happy birthday!”

“Happy birthday!!”

“.....”

“You guys...” Amid the cheers of happy birthdays, Tang Xinyun’s eyes grew teary as she started to understand the situation. “Thank... thank you all...”

Not once in her life did she experience something like this. Every birthday she had ever had had been spent with her mother and aunty Zhao where they celebrated within their icy home. Not once did anyone else ever wish her a happy birthday.

“Haha, thanking us would be a bit too much. To be honest, you should thank Yunfei. He planned everything, in fact, I’ve never seen a birthday celebration like this before!” Ling Yiyi laughed as she winked at the cake-holding Bai Yunfei.

Pausing only briefly before turning to Bai Yunfei, Tang Xinyun smiled. “Thank you, Yunfei...”

“Haha, don’t thank me,” He laughed, “As long as you’re happy. How about you blow out the candles now?”

“Blow out the candles?” Came the reply. Staring at the large cake in front of her, another question came to Tang Xinyun. “Yunfei, what is this, actually?”

“Yea, I wanted to ask that too. Yunfei, what is it?” Ling Yiyi repeated.

“Right right! Brother strawhat, what is it? What is it?”

A drop of sweat slid down Bai Yunfei’s face; this was the surprise!! Look at how he was showing it off!!

“It’s... it’s called a ‘birthday cake.’ It’s er... a specialty from my hometown. Every time it’s someone’s birthday, we make a birthday cake to eat. First, you make a wish, and then you blow out the candles to make the wish come true.”

“Eh? Was there something like that? What place has a custom like that? It’s really strange. I’ve never heard of it before, at the very least.” Ling Yiyi questioned.

“Haha, it’s a custom from a very remote village.”

“Brother strawhat, you said we can eat this right?” Huangfu Rui asked; she was focused on this particular piece of information.

“Once Xinyun blows out the candles you can.”

“Oh, okay! Let’s hurry up then! Sis Yun, blow out the candles, I want to eat the birthday cake!!”

“.....” Tang Xinyun didn’t know how to feel about Huangfu Rui. She gave everyone a grateful look—Bai Yunfei in particular—before she closed her eyes and thought for a long time.

When she opened them again, she immediately blew out the candles.

Huangfu Rui was curious, “Sis Yun, what did you wish for?”

But Bai Yunfei hurried to stop Tang Xinyun from answering, “Don’t say it! Saying it out loud prevents it from coming true. Come on, let’s eat, everyone.”

“Okay! I want to eat! I want to eat!” At the drop of a coin, Huangfu Rui’s attention was completely captivated by the desire to eat. Running to Bai Yunfei, she already had her mouth wide open.

With a plate in hand, everyone took a slice of cake and sat around the table to eat it. The cake itself was very large, but with all the people there, the cake soon found itself all gone.

Since their curiosity was piqued by this strange food, everyone had to have a slice. When they bit into it, they were all surprised by the taste. High praise came from their mouths as they ate, and Huangfu Rui had three large slices herself. So enthused was she that she had plenty of cream stuck to her face like the markings on a cat.

The Tianhun Continent had nothing like this.

The birthday cake was a remnant of the memory fragments Bai Yunfei had of the otherworldly person. With the ingredients and cooking method, Bai Yunfei was able to recreate a cake after five whole days dedicated to making it. Since some ingredients couldn't be found in this world, Bai Yunfei had to do his best with close alternatives before finally coming to a satisfactory result.

The very first thing Bai Yunfei had done with the memory he had of the otherworldly traveler had been to make Tang Xinyun a simple birthday cake...

While he was eating, Si Kongxian was suddenly hit with a question. "Oh, this reminds me! Yunfei, was this the reason why you took the kitchens over for an entire week? Were you working yourself to death in the kitchens to make this cake thing!?"

Everyone turned to look strangely at Bai Yunfei.

Their eyes flickered between him and Tang Xinyun with mischievous smiles on their faces.

"Oh my my," Ling Yiyi smiled, "Yunfei is quite the dedicated person..."

"Er..." Bai Yunfei was embarrassed. Even Tang Xinyun's face was red by this point. She was trying her best to hide by looking down at her cake, pretending to think about something.

“Hehe, Doraemon, didn’t you say you wanted to perform something for Xinyun?” To redirect everyone’s attention, Bai Yunfei turned the spotlight to Huangfu Rui who was trying to wipe away the cream on her face.

“Wha-oh!! Yeah, I remember now!” Putting down the plate with her cake rather reluctantly, she leaped to the center of the room.

“I will be singing a song for sis Yun’s birthday. Happy birthday to you, sis Yun!

“Ah-hem!” Clearing her nose and throat, Huangfu Rui prepared to sing.

“Here’s one tiger,

Here’s two tigers!

They run fast!

They run fast!

One has no ears

One has no...”

This was the song Bai Yunfei had her sing. Two Tigers, a classic child folk song that would bring a smile to anyone’s face.

After her performance came Mo Xiaoxuan. Volunteering to take center stage, he smiled, “Hehe, I want to perform too! I know a magic trick that’s very magical...”

As the leading performer, Huangfu Rui set the stage for a very lively night. One after another, Zhong Xuhao, Si Kongxian, and several others followed after Zhong Xuhao to perform, much to the applause and the loud laughter of everyone watching...

Chapter 288: Accompanying You Back Home

Tang Xinyun's birthday party came to an end later that night. The group slowly filed out of Bai Yunfei's room to return to their own rooms to rest for the night. Lian Lingmin and Ling Yiyi both led Huangfu Rui back to their courtyards. Huangfu Rui was still eating a slice of cake with great gusto, in fact.

This left Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun ten meters behind the group, walking side by side.

.....

"Yunfei... thank you for tonight, really." The joy was still apparent on her face. Her lips were curled in a smile and dimples could be seen on her cheeks.

Since the moon was still hanging brightly in the night sky, she looked up and brushed a few strands of hair behind her ear—a habit of hers.

Bai Yunfei laughed. "Don't worry about it," he shook his head nonchalantly, "I don't have much to do right now, so when I found out it was your birthday, I knew I just had to whip up something for everyone. A birthday celebration should be a happy one."

He said it like it was a trivial matter, but Tang Xinyun knew that 'whipping up' something like this was contrary to what he was saying. "Yunfei," She began, "you... didn't have to do that for me. I know you feel guilty about what happened back in Curopia City, but still... you don't have to feel like you owe me something. You don't have to try and atone to me..."

"I..."

Bai Yunfei didn't know how to continue his sentence.

He was confused.

Was it because of guilt?

Yes, maybe it was...

His hesitation seemed to have disappointed Tang Xinyun somehow. A flicker of sadness came into her eyes before she turned to look at the night sky above.

For a while, the two remained in deep silence.

The silence was broken by Tang Xinyun.

Still looking up at the sky, she smiled. "But still, I need to thank you, Yunfei. This has to be the most exciting birthday I've ever had.

"I know everyone's worried that I feel unhappy about not being able to train in elemental fire and wanted to cheer me up... knowing that everyone's so worried about me, I feel happy. I really do.

"So... really. I want to thank everyone."

"Haha, aren't we all family here? There's no need to say thank you between family."

"Yes." Came a silent reply, but nothing else.

By now, the two of them were lagging behind Ling Yiyi and the other two females by a good margin.

Having sensed Tang Xinyun's relatively dispirited emotions, Bai Yunfei felt a little confused. "What's wrong? Are you homesick?"

"Homesick?" Tang Xinyun looked surprised.

A cold smile crept onto her lips.

It surprised Bai Yunfei; he had never seen the kind Tang Xinyun reveal a look of such contempt before.

"I could never feel that way about such an icy bird-cage. If not for my mother, I wouldn't even call that place home." Tang Xinyun shook her head. "Mother is too attached to it. She hopes that one

day, that person will change their mind. How silly...”

Her feet had stopped moving by this point. As if lost in her thoughts, Tang Xinyun looked to her left as if trying to see countless of kilometers away at the source of suffering she had felt before.

But somehow, she remained as kindly and warm as ever.

“It’s been a year since I left ‘home.’ I wonder if mother is doing well; every winter the wound on her left shoulder starts hurting. Usually, I’m the one that gives her a massage, but since I’m not there, I hope aunty Zhao is doing it in my place...”

“It’s going to be the Reunion Festival in a month, but I won’t be there for mother. I used to be there for mother whenever my ‘family’ put up a huge party, but I didn’t go last year—mother must’ve suffered a lot... this year won’t be any different...”

The more she talked, the more the memories of the past started to haunt her. Soon enough, she was starting to choke up with emotions.

“I... I wanted to get stronger. Strong enough that I can’t be bullied; strong enough to protect my mother from suffering...”

The words she spoke now reminded Bai Yunfei of when they were talking to each other that one night on the roof back in Guyi City.

Like when she started to cry after accepting that she wouldn’t be able to train in elemental fire after the events in Curopia City, Bai Yunfei felt a stab of pain go through him.

Tang Xinyun stood in the silent night and illuminated by moonlight. She was absent-minded, and her demeanor made her seem delicate and even more helpless than before...

.....

“Xinyun, I’ll take you home to see your mother!”

That snapped Tang Xinyun out of her begrieved thoughts.

“What... what did you say, Yunfei?” She turned to him to ask.

He returned her look tenderly and with a smile, “I said, if you want to see your mother, let’s go. I’ll protect you on your way back.”

“But...” Having not expected such a suggestion, Tang Xinyun didn’t know how to respond to Bai Yunfei other than to stare.

“What?” He asked, “You don’t want to go home?”

“I do, but...” She hesitated to reply honestly, but her eyes betrayed a hint of longing.

“Then it’s decided! We leave tomorrow, so we can make it back for the Reunion Festival!”

Tang Xinyun was very clearly tempted by such a proposal, but she still couldn’t help but feel some misgivings. “But... there’s only a month left until then. My home is in Mo City in the Forest Pass Province. That’s a very long ways away from here, we can’t possibly...”

“Don’t worry about that, I’ll make good on my promise!” Bai Yunfei promised. “I’m going to go prepare! You should too! We leave tomorrow morning!”

Not even bothering to wait for an answer, Bai Yunfei turned around to run back.

In no time at all, he disappeared under the guise of the night.

“Yunfei, wait a mo—”

It was too late; he was already gone.

Staring off into the distance where Bai Yunfei ran away, the corners of Tang Xinyun’s mouth gradually twitched into a smile.

She turned to face the Western Point. She was walking even faster now, and her eyes were filled with excitement.

Both her cheeks were flushed a faint tint of red as well...

Bai Yunfei on the other hand was flying as fast as he could, but not to his courtyards. Instead, he was headed to the Northern Point.

He was aiming for Zi Jin's courtyard.

Before he could knock, Zi Jin's voice called out to him from within, "Enter."

Pushing open the door, Bai Yunfei could see Zi Jin holding a jade slip in front of him and a confused look on his face.

"Master." Bai Yunfei greeted him.

He nodded, "Yunfei, what brings you here to see me so late?"

Bai Yunfei hesitated as if he found it hard to say what was on his mind.

"Master... your... your student requests to borrow a soul armament that can fly..."

"What's that? A soul armament that can fly? Where for?"

"I... I wish to take Xinyun to see her family..."

"Seeing her home?" Suspicious, Zi Jin pondered the question before suddenly coming to a new question. "Going back to meet her father so soon?" He questioned in confusion.

"..." Bai Yunfei nearly stumbled over his feet at that.

Was this what a Soul King was supposed to say? This was more like something an ordinary old man would tease his grandson with!!

"The Reunion Festival is nearly here, and Xinyun wants to see her mother. The idea to send her home occurred to me, but walking there would take too long. Thus, I was hoping master would let me borrow a soul armament that could fly to take her home..."

Zi Jin smiled as he listened to Bai Yunfei's explanation. "I see now. Haha, very well... there's no problem then."

With a wave of his right hand, a ray of green light immediately shot into sight right in front of Bai Yunfei. Grabbing hold of it, Bai Yunfei realized he was holding a sword about a meter long and greenish in color.

Chapter 289: Tempest Sword

Zi Jin laughed. “This is one of the most basic types of wind swords. You might be weaker than before, but you’re still a Soul Ancestor. So, controlling one of these—even with someone else—will be easy. As long as you can transmit your soulforce into it, you can ride it.”

Bai Yunfei looked at the sword and waited for the notification to appear in his mind.

Equipment Grade: Mid Earth
Elemental Affinity: Wind
Attack: 960
Equipment Effect: By transmitting soulforce into this item, flight becomes capable.
Upgrade Requirement: 100 Soulpoints

It wasn’t as if Zi Jin hadn’t anything better than a mid-earth tier soul armament. However, giving Bai Yunfei a higher grade armament would be pointless since he wouldn’t be able to make efficient use of it.

“Thank you, master!”

“When do you leave?” Zi Jin nodded.

“Tomorrow morning.”

“That soon?” The elderly man remarked. “Then be careful. Don’t cause trouble and protect Xinyun as well as you can.”

“Yes master. Your disciple will be cautious!”

.....

With no small amount of excitement, Bai Yunfei left the Northern Point. By the time he was at the cross-sections between mountain points, Bai Yunfei was already very impatient to try it

out. Looking at the dormitories in the Western Point and then to the sword in his hand, he muttered to himself, “Should I... give it a spin?”

Bai Yunfei had always wanted to ride one of these types of soul armaments. He hadn’t the nerve to use the Cataclysmic Seal to fly, and he never came across the chance to make a soul armament that could fly. Hence, Bai Yunfei was in a hurry to experience what it was like.

Pushing his soulforce into the sword, Bai Yunfei watched as the sword started to hum. Letting go, the sword slowly rose a meter into the air.

For two whole minutes, Bai Yunfei stared at the sword as it hummed and shined before it finally dropped down onto the ground with a plop.

This was how long the sword could fly with just a single soulpoint.

Nodding in understanding, Bai Yunfei made the sword float once more before hopping on it.

Maintaining his balance wasn’t a problem, as things turned out. Gingerly testing his sense of balance, Bai Yunfei found that the sword wouldn’t sway even if he tried.

He nodded in satisfaction. Pointing a finger forward, he commanded. “Fly!!”

“Whoosh!!”

The sword underneath his feet flashed before launching into the air with a flurry of dust flying up behind it.

Bai Yunfei nearly fell off at first; he wasn’t used to the feeling, but he was quick to adapt to the situation.

Though he was traveling fast, he was still traveling within the realm of visibility. Disregarding the wind blowing across his face,

Bai Yunfei was excited to look around and see the scenery go by him.

With the green light coming from the sword, Bai Yunfei was like a meteorite as he sped to the dormitories on the Western Point.

Upon arriving, he stretched his hand out to reclaim the sword.

“How refreshing!!” he couldn’t help but exclaim. “What took me half an hour to walk only took a few minutes to fly! How convenient flying armaments are.”

Tenderly caressing the sword, Bai Yunfei muttered to himself, “Tomorr—ah, that’s not right—today is the day we leave. I should practice with this a little more. I have to bring Xinyun with me after all...”

“Hm, the sword’s a little small, wouldn’t it be cramped if two were to stand on it? Hm... the swords of the first elder, the third elder, and Song Lin were able to expand. Can this sword expand as well?”

Curious now, Bai Yunfei transmitted his soulforce into the sword again.

As expected, the sword glowed brightly before expanding in length.

“Oh ho, it can grow bigger. I don’t have to worry about being cramped then...” Bai Yunfei nodded in satisfaction.

Though, why was it that he felt a little disappointed?

“I’ll fly a few more rounds then. Gotta learn to fly this as well as I can before we go.” Bai Yunfei heaved the sword a bit. “But before that, something important needs to be done first...”

“Upgrade!”

.....

Several minutes later.

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Mid Earth

Elemental Affinity: Wind

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 960

Additional Attack: 460

Equipment Effect: By transmitting soulforce into this item, flight becomes capable.

+10 Additional Effect: By using soulforce, the speed of flight can be increased by 100% for one minute.

Cooldown of 2 minutes.

Upgrade Requirement: 100 Soulpoints

Upon looking at the stats of the newly upgraded sword, Bai Yunfei nodded his head. “An increase in speed, I’ll take it. Let’s try it out!”

“Bzzzzz...” Letting go of the sword, Bai Yunfei watched as it floated up to his chest before jumping on it. With a burst of several different colored lights, he flew off into the sky again.

As he flew, Bai Yunfei subconsciously dug into the sword with his feet as he activated the additional effect of the sword. At first, a rich flow of green light formed behind the sword before it exploded with a ‘pop.’ As soon as the light popped, the sword’s momentum increased twofold with the accompanying sound of the air being torn apart.

Having not been prepared for such a change, Bai Yunfei nearly fell down from the sword.

Somehow managing to hold onto his balance, Bai Yunfei remained on the sword. A wave of satisfaction washed over him as he experienced the increased wind, and he waited for the inevitable decrease in speed a minute later.

Like he was driving a chariot, Bai Yunfei flew all over Mt. Crimson even more cautious than before. He was trying to become more proficient at flying. Though he was flying around for the fun of it too.

Flying the sword himself and experiencing flight when Xiao Binzi controlled it were two different matters. The amount of joy and exhilaration he was feeling now by flying it himself was indescribable.

His indiscriminate flying caught the attention of many of the other students of the Crafting School. Many of them were jealous, but a good deal of the older students only laughed it off when they realized it was Bai Yunfei who was flying it.

Another hour went by before Bai Yunfei finally returned to his home, albeit reluctantly. Putting the sword down after entering his bedroom, Bai Yunfei muttered to himself, “Since the effect is like a tempest, I’ll call it the Tempest Sword!”

Bai Yunfei stored the sword away and got himself ready to train. Since he had used a decent sum of soulforce, he needed to regain as much as he could before morning.

He’d also need to pack up everything in his space ring, so he could leave at a moment’s notice.

Accompanying Tang Xinyun back home had been on a whim, but Bai Yunfei didn’t feel any regrets. He didn’t want her to feel sad, and doing this was the best option he knew of to cheer her up.

Was it because he was feeling guilty? Bai Yunfei didn’t know...

.....

The next morning—

Outside the dormitories to the Western Point, a large group of people had gathered to send Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun off.

All of them were rather surprised to hear that Bai Yunfei would

be accompanying Tang Xinyun back home. It was far too sudden.

Then, when they really digested the information, a look of mischievous understanding came over them.

“Yunfei, I leave Xinyun to you. See her home and bring her back safe and sound. If I see even a hair of hers touched, I won’t forgive you!” Reluctant to part with Tang Xinyun, Ling Yiyi made sure to threaten Bai Yunfei as he talked with Ye Zhiqiu and the others.

Bai Yunfei nodded, “Don’t worry. I’ll be careful, sister Ling.”

“Brother strawhat, sis Yun, come back quickly, okay?” Huangfu Rui pleaded as she held Xiao Rourou.

“Haha, we’ll be back soon enough. I’ll bring back some souvenirs for you.”

“Really!?” The girl leaped up with excitement, “You better promise me! Don’t forget about them!”

Bai Yunfei laughed, “I won’t forget.”

“Brother Bai, the best gift is when no one gets one!” Mo Xiaoxuan laughed.

“Haha, of course...”

After their goodbyes, Bai Yunfei waved his right hand, materializing the Tempest Sword. Jumping onto it, Bai Yunfei turned to Tang Xinyun, “Let’s get going, Xinyun.”

“Yes.” Her face reddened slightly as she replied; presumably from the excitement of being able to go back home. With a gentle hop, she landed on the sword behind Bai Yunfei.

She was weaker compared to when she was an early-stage Soul Sprite. Now that she was a late-stage Soul Warrior, her sense of balance was without a doubt worse than Bai Yunfei’s, so when she climbed aboard, she faltered slightly.

A sweet-smelling scent wafted into Bai Yunfei’s nose, causing his heart to halt for just half a second. Disguising his momentary loss

of self with a cough, Bai Yunfei turned to everyone else, “We’re off, everyone!”

Tang Xinyun nodded in agreement.

Pushing off with his foot, Bai Yunfei commanded the sword to prime itself.

And just like that, the sword took off into the sky in a burst of green light.

Just a year ago, neither of the two were as strong as they were now.

The Forest Pass Province was a good distance away; would the two of them be able to reach their destination without a problem?

And the ‘cage’ Tang Xinyun called home.

Would anything happen there?

Chapter 290: Tang Xinyun's Identity

There was a flash of green light speeding to the west. A bit of orange light was imbued in the green light. Within the green light, two people could be seen standing on top of a sword enjoying the scenery and talking to one another.

It was Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun.

The orange light was from the +12 effect of the Cataclysmic Seal, but since Bai Yunfei was worried that the essence fireseed in the brick would be affected somehow, he had toned down the effects enough so that most of the wind would be blocked.

Bai Yunfei directed Tang Xinyun toward the Forest Pass Province since they started. The cities and villages below came and went in a linear fashion. They were traveling in one direction, getting lost wouldn't be that easy.

At first, the two of them felt rather awkward since they were 'alone together,' but with time, the two of them started to lighten up.

Soon enough, they started to enjoy the scenery with one another and had pleasant conversations to pass the time. Every so often, they would drop down to ask for directions or lodging for the night. When there were days that they couldn't find any lodging, they'd sleep in the mountains or continue flying through the air.

For the sake of reaching Mo City for the Reunion Festival, Bai Yunfei was flying as fast as he could. Whenever the situation allowed for it, he would activate the speed boosting effect of the Tempest Sword to fly even faster for a minute.

He came up with a method to make the process even more efficient. Since he had the Violet Soul Ring and its stockpiling ability, he'd give Tang Xinyun it. She'd fill it up with soulforce for him to withdraw.

This way, the two of them were able to prolong the amount of time they spent in the air.

The secret ring no longer needed to be hidden to Tang Xinyun.

The results from flying outclassed the results from walking by a very large margin. In just a short six days, the two of them were able to reach the Great Plains Province. From there, only another thirteen days were needed for them to cross into the Northern Cliff Province and enter the the Forest Pass Province right next to it.

It was only after they reached the Forest Pass Province when Bai Yunfei let out a sigh of relief. One week was left until their deadline, so Bai Yunfei sped up the pace and hoped that nothing bad would happen.

.....

Today, Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun were taking a rest in a small town in the Forest Pass Province. After this break, they'd continue on their journey.

"I've been meaning to ask you, Xinyun. Is your family in the interior of Mo City? I hear it's the capital city of the province." Bai Yunfei asked her.

Slightly taken aback from the question, Tang Xinyun took a minute to compose herself before answering, "Yes, my family lives at the very center."

Since Bai Yunfei had never talked with Tang Xinyun about her family, he didn't know much about her familial background.

Though he did know a few things, like that the Tang was a large clan—even larger than Mo Xiaoxuan's family—but other than that, he knew nothing else.

Tang Xinyun wasn't very willing to talk about it, and Bai Yunfei wasn't willing to press her about it. However, since they were about to visit her family, Bai Yunfei found it prudent to at least clear some things up first.

“Your clan is a big one, isn’t it?” Bai Yunfei asked.

Then a strange thought occurred to him, “Hold on... Mo City? The Tang clan in Mo City...? It seems a little familiar, strange. Maybe I heard about them somewhere...?”

When he said that he might’ve heard about them somewhere, he clearly wasn’t talking about Tang Xinyun. He was instead talking about hearing about them from somewhere else.

The situation took a turn.

Tang Xinyun bit her lower lip as if she was hesitating.

In time, she looked as if she managed to draw up enough motivation to face Bai Yunfei. “The Tang clan in Mo City are one of the Five Clans...”

“Bzzz...”

All of a sudden, the Tempest Sword suddenly swung off course by a slight margin.

Managing to stabilize the sword, Bai Yunfei swung his head back to look at Tang Xinyun, “One of the Five Clans!? You’re from that family in Mo City?”

It was only after Tang Xinyun’s explanation that Bai Yunfei remembered what Song Lin once told him about the soul cultivator world. The continent had the Ten Schools and also the Five Clans. Of the Five Clans, the Tang clan from Mo City was one of them!

“Yes,” Tang Xinyun whispered, “my family is that Tang clan.”

Bai Yunfei didn’t know what to say. He knew that her family was large, but never did he expect them to be this large!

One of the Five Clans!

A myriad of clans, families, and households existed on the continent; to have the title of being one of the Five Clans, just what kind of accomplishments would that need!?

“Yunfei, the ‘cage’ I told you about is the very same Tang clan. Are you... going to treat me differently now that you know that?”

She sounded slightly distressed.

Turning his head, Bai Yunfei noticed that Tang Xinyun was looking at the ground.

“What does my opinion of you have to do with your family? Even if you’re just some sort of girl born in some ordinary village, you are still you, Xinyun.”

His answer caught Tang Xinyun off guard.

“Eh?” She responded blankly.

Her head tilted to stare hard at Bai Yunfei, and her eyes were shining brighter than before. Her lips were curling, as if she was touched by what Bai Yunfei said.

Bai Yunfei found it rather embarrassing to be looked at like that. Scratching his head, he asked, “Did... did I say something wrong?”

“No... you didn’t,” Tang Xinyun shook her head with a smile, “thank you, Yunfei.”

“Eh? What are you thanking me for?”

Tang Xinyun didn’t answer him.

“Yunfei, do you want to know about my family?” She prompted him with a question.

Noticing the difference in her attitude, Bai Yunfei said nothing so he could listen.

He didn’t have to say anything, as Tang Xinyun continued on without waiting for his response. “As one of the Five Clans, the Tang has plenty of influence and subordinates. Even the overseer of the Forest Pass Province, Marquis Xuanyuan has to be kind to them to a degree. In just Mo City alone, there’s thousands of people in the clan compared to the ten thousand people in the continent. Even if the Tang were a security institution, any

outsider would still look to them with a great amount of respect...

“What plenty of people don’t know about the very same powerful family is that the Tang has a dark side... internal disputes happen without end in the clan. It doesn’t matter if it’s for an object or status, the family will treat each other as enemies. Even during meal times, many of them plot against one another.

“I am from the Tang. More specifically, I am the fourth daughter of the head of the Tang...”

Bai Yunfei’s mouth dropped open; Tang Xinyun was the daughter of the head of Tang!!

That was simply beyond his expectations.

Ignoring the shock Bai Yunfei was going through, Tang Xinyun continued to speak, “But, so what? I am not just some tool to be used to expand the influence of the family! We’re already one of the Five Clans, yet that isn’t enough. For the sake of becoming the ‘strongest,’ the clan is willing to sacrifice the lives of the younger! We are used as bargaining chips to be wed off for political and martial power...

“Only three people in that place felt like family to me. Auntie Zhao, my mother, and my third brother who left the Tang a long time ago. They were the only ones. My own father, eldest brother, second brother, my other brothers, my sisters, my uncles, grandfathers, and even my hermit of a great grandfather, none of them treated me like family...”

“My mother was wed into the Tang clan when she was eighteen as the first wife. Father loved her dearly at first, but when some of the other members of the clan started to criticize him for not marrying another after several years, father wed another and she gave birth to three sons.

“I was conceived shortly after they were, but mother and I lost favor with my father since I was born female...

“During the seventeen years after that woman entered the Tang, my mother never experienced a good day again. For my entire upbringing, I never saw mother happy once. Mother was mocked constantly by that woman, but all mother could do was bear it in silence and hope that father would one day go back to what he used to be, but after waiting almost twenty years, isn’t that hope as dried up as a wilted Wisteria tree? How much longer should she wait?

“I want to get stronger. So strong that I can help mother break away from our family, but...”

Her words trailed off.

Bai Yunfei knew that she was thinking about her loss of strength.

Not only did she lose her strength. She lost her ‘hope.’

“Xinyun...” He wanted to say something comforting, but he didn’t know what to say. He was neither strong enough nor influential enough to declare the entirety of the Tang as his enemies for Xinyun’s sake. Just helping Tang Xinyun recover was hard enough, so to promise her anything bigger than that would be nothing but hot air.

“Boom!!”

While Bai Yunfei was trying to formulate something to say and while Tang Xinyun was in her downcasted mood, a sudden explosion snapped the two back to reality.

Whipping his head down in surprise, Bai Yunfei could see several golden rays of light come flying out of the forest down below!

Chapter 291: Big Dagger and Little Dagger

“Bang!”

A sound of impact could be heard when the flying object was blocked by the protective barrier created by the Cataclysmic Seal. Since Bai Yunfei had powered up the barrier beforehand, it was able to stop the opposing object without posing harm to him and Tang Xinyun.

The sword went from a breakneck pacing to a screeching halt. Tang Xinyun flew into Bai Yunfei’s back due to the forward inertia.

Ignoring the small yelp and soft sensation, Bai Yunfei’s right hand rose while he stabilized the flying sword. In an instant, the Fire-tipped Spear appeared in his waiting hand.

Tang Xinyun stepped back with a slightly red face. Her eyes glanced in the direction the attack had come from.

However, another attack did not come.

Bai Yunfei let out a slight breath of relief, but his eyes remained wary, making sure the coast really was clear.

Underneath them was a large swath of forest. Within the forest, a group of people could be heard embroiled in a fierce fight. The strike from before had been from the blade of one of the fighters, but it had been accidental. None of the combatants had noticed Bai Yunfei or Tang Xinyun, so that strike could be called a ‘stray bullet’ rather than an intentional one.

Either way, Bai Yunfei felt displeased with the situation, “If you’re going to fight, then fight among each other. Why bother flinging an attack into the air!?”

A total of six fighters were fighting down below. On one side, there were two soul cultivators with a greenish light around them, meaning they were both wind affinity soul cultivators.

On the other side, the four fighters were all dressed in black robes, indicating they were from the same group.

Of the two fighters, one of them was a young man and the other was an even younger man, but neither of their appearances could be seen accurately. The younger one was an early-stage Soul Ancestor, and the older one was a late-stage Soul Ancestor.

Of the three black-robed men they were fighting, two of them were mid-stage Soul Ancestors and one of them was a late-stage Soul Ancestor.

The difference in strength between the two sides was extremely obvious to see, but somehow, the two sides were in a stalemate.

That was because of the mysterious but special fighting styles the two youngsters were using with one another.

The fourth black-robed man sat outside the battle with a solemn expression. There was no elemental glow surrounding his body, and his strength couldn't be judged.

This was a battle between soul cultivators where both parties possessed a lot of strength.

On their travels, Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun had come across plenty of troubles and fights. It happened more frequently than not, and Bai Yunfei would usually take care of the problem if it was a bandit raid of some sort. When it came to fights between soul cultivators, Bai Yunfei felt disinclined to stick around. He would usually leave after a quick observation of the situation.

It was true that Bai Yunfei felt rather annoyed when they were nearly struck, but he didn't want to stick around either. After a small moment of consideration, Bai Yunfei decided to take off.

“Eh?”

Before he could, Bai Yunfei noticed something strange taking place in the battle below him.

The two soul cultivators had a very particular way of fighting. Both of them held exceptional-looking flying daggers in one hand and a longsword in the other. Their longswords were used when they needed to defend themselves.

As wind affinity soul cultivators, both of them would make use of their speed to withdraw some distance to throw their flying daggers. Then, the other person would take advantage of how their enemies would dodge to strike at an opening. The two worked in tandem to create openings and exploit them, and if not for the equally strong enemies, they would've opened them full of holes already.

At an even closer look, one could see that the two soul cultivators had the upper hand.

As he watched the two figures throw their flying daggers one after another, Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up with curiosity, "Are those...?"

"Aren't they... the Flying Daggers!?"

The small gasp of shock prompted Bai Yunfei to turn around. "What did you say, Xinyun? The Flying Daggers?"

Still surprised, Tang Xinyun continued to look and point at the two soul cultivators. "I know those two. They're two of the most well-known bounty hunters in the Forest Pass Province: Han Chong and Han Lin. Han Chong is called the Big Dagger, and Han Lin is called the Little Dagger."

"Bounty hunters?" He raised an eyebrow at that. Even he knew something about people in that line of work. They were often people who worked for commission; similar to mercenaries. Like mercenaries, bounty hunters were a mix of ordinary people and soul cultivators, but the difference lay with how they worked.

Mercenaries worked in large groups. Bounty hunters worked with no more than three people in a team—many worked by

themselves.

“My family hired a few bounty hunters two years ago. Those two had been hired, and they were the only ones who accomplished the mission. It’s said they never miss their targets, and even though they aren’t particularly strong by themselves, the two of them work together so well that even a Soul Exalt would have to be cautious around them.”

“Are they really that amazing?” Bai Yunfei asked in curiosity. “Xinyun, do you know who those four people are?”

Looking again at the battle, Tang Xinyun was silent for a moment.

“Those four... I actually might know who they are.”

“Really?” Bai Yunfei hadn’t expected a positive response. Tang Xinyun wasn’t a person that knew much about the world, so he was surprised to hear that she knew who both sides were, “Who are they?”

“If I’m not wrong...” She bit her lower lip, “they’re the major criminals known as the ‘Four Death Gods’.”

“Four Death Gods?” Bai Yunfei was astounded. What kind of people loved having nicknames like that?

Nodding her head, Tang Xinyun said, “That should be them. I remember coming across a warrant issued by the provincial authorities. The four of them are criminals capable of any and every crime with the strength to do whatever they wish. They love taking the corpses of female commoners and cutting them into pieces most especially. The four of them are demented demons of nature!”

By the final sentence, Tang Xinyun’s entire frame was shaking with anger.

“I see...” Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes. “Do you know any specific details about the four?”

“What?” Tang Xinyun asked, “Yunfei, are you planning on fighting them? They’re all Soul Ancestors, Yunfei! You joining the fight would only mean...”

“Haha, don’t worry. I won’t do anything rash. I just want to be prepared. So, tell me what you know about the four.”

“Well...” Tang Xinyun didn’t want to prod him about it, so she pointed a pale finger at the rightmost person, “That one’s ‘Go Die,’ the youngest of the four. He’s a mid-stage Soul Ancestor with an earth affinity. His weapon is the mother and son sword. He loves to use sneak attacks when they’re least expected.

“The one next to him is ‘Must Die.’ Like his twin, he’s also a mid-stage Soul Ancestor. He likes using a hook claw, and he specializes in a defense that’s hard to deal with.

“The strongest one is ‘Never Die.’ He’s a late-stage Soul Ancestor with a water affinity. He got his nickname from how he never seems to die no matter what. People say he knows a heaven tier soul skill that helps him heal from any wound instantly. He likes using a mid-earth tier saber that’s over a meter long and has a metal affinity. Rumors say he has a very strong armament skill, but I don’t know what it is...”

“What’s with all those nicknames!!” Bai Yunfei deadpanned. “What about that one?” He pointed at the one sitting outside of the battle.

“He’s the eldest of the Four Death Gods, ‘Insta Die.’ No one has ever seen him fight before, so we don’t know how strong he is.”

“Insta Die?” Bai Yunfei raised an eyebrow at that. In his mind, he was already thinking that Insta Die was the strongest one of the four. If he could kill in one shot, that was an extremely amazing feat.

“Yunfei, are you really planning on helping the Flying Daggers?” The look on Bai Yunfei’s face was more than enough to let Tang

Xinyun know what he was thinking. There was no way Bai Yunfei would help the four Death Gods, so the only other conclusion was that Bai Yunfei would want to help the Flying Daggers eliminate the other four.

“Let’s wait and see.” Bai Yunfei shook his head, “Now’s not the time.”

Tang Xinyun was hesitant, but she said nothing. The two continued to stand on top of the sword, watching the fight for several minutes. Bai Yunfei had been very curious about watching the spectacle, especially whenever Han Chong and Han Lin fought with one another.

The Flying Dagger brothers had reputation as strong bounty hunters, and it was not an empty title for sure. They were able to gain an advantage over their current enemies even though their enemies were of an even higher level of strength, and the more they fought, the more the three Death Gods were hurt and overwhelmed.

The energy levels of both sides were running considerably low after some time went by. The Flying Daggers still had a greater advantage, and if things were to continue like this, the Four Death Gods would surely lose.

Even at this juncture, the one named ‘Insta Die’ continued to sit where he was with the same solemn look on his face.

Bai Yunfei’s eyes scanned the area for a brief moment. His eyes flashed several times before the sword underneath the two sped off.

“Eh? Yunfei, weren’t you going to help out?”

Tang Xinyun hadn’t thought that Bai Yunfei would leave, but the sword was already taking them away.

Several hundred meters later, the two of them came to a stop at a tree that seemed to span into the heavens.

Turning around, Bai Yunfei said to Tang Xinyun, “You stay here, Xinyun. I’m going to help!!”

In response, Tang Xinyun stepped onto the tree branch next to them. She knew what Bai Yunfei was thinking, so she made no attempt to stop him. Before Bai Yunfei left, Tang Xinyun said, “Yunfei, be careful... even though they used up a lot of soulforce, they’re still Soul Ancestors. Your soulbound armaments and lifebound armaments might help you, but you can’t use any elemental fire; don’t get yourself in too much danger... if something’s off, run away as soon as you can.”

Bai Yunfei nodded, “Relax, Xinyun. I’ll be discrete.”

He looked to Xiao Bai on Tang Xinyun’s shoulder next, “Xiao Bai, protect Xinyun in my place. Stay here and don’t make a move.”

“Chirp!!” Xiao Bai tweeted with a flap of its wings.

“Then... I’m going!”

With a small smile to reassure Tang Xinyun, Bai Yunfei hopped back onto the sword. He equipped the Walk-on Strawhat before speeding back to the fight.

Chapter 292: Insta Die!

Han Chong's eye peeked to the right. He sighed when he saw the two unknown soul cultivators leave the area. Since the two had been staring down at the six of them for such a long time, he was worried that they might've had some sort of grudge against them.

To come in and steal the treasure when both sides were weak was a common tactic in the soul cultivator world.

On the other side, the Four Death Gods were also wiping their brows in relief. They weren't doing so well at the moment, so to have a third party interject would add to their troubles.

It was the consensus of every soul cultivator that anyone with a soul armament that could fly was a strong individual.

Neither of the sides tried to investigate the newcomers strength since that'd require them to focus elsewhere, and to do that would mean to earn the ire of the newcomer.

Three rays of green light shot from Han Chong's hand as he forced back Never Die. At the same time, his left hand brought his longsword up to block the incoming attack from Go Die.

As soon as the attack was reflected, he leaped back and tossed another three daggers at his foes.

“Han Lin, Spiraling Flying Daggers!!”

Over the course of his actions, Han Chong had already rushed back to where Han Lin was. With a grunt, he shook his right hand and a strange spiral-shaped flying dagger appeared in his hand.

Han Lin was currently forcing back Must Die, but when he heard Han Chong's command, he took out a similar flying dagger.

The two of them threw their flying daggers at the same time. They traveled to both sides of Must Die in a spiraling formation and with a trajectory that was completely unpredictable!

The power behind the flying daggers was beyond what the two brothers had thrown out before. The two people who had been in the way of the daggers trajectory were far too afraid to take them head-on, so they opted to leap out of the way.

When they did, Han Chong and Han Lin could be seen pointing their fingers at Never Die!

“Whoosh whoosh!”

The trajectory of the two daggers changed abruptly. In the blink of an eye, they twisted around one another and increased in power, flying at Never Die’s chest at a breakneck speed!

Prior to this attack, Never Die had been in the middle of deciding where he should go. He never thought that the target of the two daggers would be him.

Eyes widening in surprise, all Never Die could do was bring up his golden blade to protect himself.

“Clank!!”

There was an ear-piercing crack as the two flying daggers struck the golden blade.

Thinking himself safe, Never Die let out a sigh of relief, but then, something out of the corner of his eye caused him to blanch!

The flying daggers hadn’t been rebounded by his blade.

Instead, they cut through the blade and continued on their paths!

“Crack! Pfttt!!”

There was a cracking sound before a fountain of blood came from Never Die’s back. The two Spiralling Flying Daggers had broken a mid-earth tier soul armament and shot straight through Never Die!!

“It worked!!”

Han Lin and Han Chong both looked elated as they admired their

success.

Then, the expression on their faces froze up!

Even though there were two holes through his chest, Never Die gave a malevolent sneer as if he didn't care about the wounds on his body! Raising his sword over his head, Never Die began to feed his soulforce into his weapon. A golden ray of light materialized before splitting into two more rays of light. They spanned ten meters from one blade to the other.

With the same malevolent sneer on his face, he swung his sword down!

“Shiiing!”

Han Chong's reacted fast enough to push Han Lin in the back before the three rays of light could move. With the weaker Han Lin pushed ten meters away, Han Chong now had enough time to dodge. Feeding soulforce into his legs, Han Chong immediately leaped back with green light aiding his retreat.

“Boom!!”

The three beams of light smashed into the ground and carved out holes about a meter wide.

Having been in the zone of danger, Han Chong hadn't been fast enough to escape unscathed. A stream of blood could be seen on his left shoulder, and his movements were clearly much slower than before. It remained to be seen if his left arm had been completely cut through.

Never Die, on the other hand, was wiping the remaining rivulets of blood from his grotesque-looking smile. Two blue glows of light were shining from his chest, and within two quick moments, the wounds he had sustained earlier healed without a trace! If not for the holes in his clothes and the blood staining the edges, Never Die would've looked as if he hadn't been touched at all!

Two barks of laughter came from Never Die. He was about to call

for his two brothers to continue their attacks when something caused him to turn around. “Eldest brother!!”

A figure wearing a strawhat suddenly came out of the thickets of the woods with a red spear in hand! Like a shadow darting out of the forest with frightening speed, this person had almost gone unnoticed until Never Die saw him. The person’s figure shimmered with light before splitting into three. The three figures struck at Insta Die with their flaming spears!!

.....

The decrease in Bai Yunfei’s aura was due to the effects of the Walk-on Strawhat. Combined with the fact that everyone was too busy worrying about the battle, he was able to get close to the battleground without being detected. Whenever one of the sides unleashed a large-scale strike, Bai Yunfei would move out of the way in fear of being caught in the crossfire. As a Soul Ancestor that knew how to use the Wave Treading Steps, he was able to move hundreds of meters to the tree in front of Insta Die.

Not once did the idea of underestimating one of the Four Death Gods cross Bai Yunfei’s mind. His first plan of action was to enact a sneak attack in hopes of opening up the battle with him at an advantage. One strike to gain the upper hand.

Bai Yunfei was extremely willing to use the +12 additional effect of his Fire-tipped Spear, the Doppelganger.

With one doppelganger to his left and right, Bai Yunfei was essentially cutting off any route of escape for Insta Die. Since evading would’ve been impossible, Insta Die’s reaction earned Bai Yunfei’s admiration for a split moment.

Instead of moving from his spot, the man bent down to evade all three of the spears!

Bai Yunfei was in shock that his own attack had been avoided, but despite his shock, he brought his right leg up to deliver a swift

kick.

“Bang!”

“Crack!”

Unexpectedly, the sound of something cracking could be heard as the person went flying like a bullet. The instant the person went flying, the sound of bones snapping could be heard...

There was a crashing sound as Insta Die landed on the ground several meters away. A cloud of dirt was kicked into the air, but even that cleared away to reveal his body.

A caved in chest and two cloudy eyes. He was dead.

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

The silence of death fell over the area.

Whether it was Big or Little Dagger, the remaining three Death Gods, or even Bai Yunfei, they all stared at the corpse with wide open eyes.

“Eldest brother!”

Never Die was the first to react. With a furious howl, he flew to where Insta Die was and held him up. His right hand flew to where his chest had been caved in and a blue light started to glow around the area. He was feeding his soulforce into the man in an attempt to save him.

“.....” Bai Yunfei realized something at that point. “So that’s what his nickname meant!!

“Insta Die... one move to die... it didn’t mean to kill someone else, it referred to himself!”

So that first reaction earlier wasn’t some sort of godly reaction. It was just his knees folding in due to fear!? What the hell!

That guy was a regular person!! Not a soul cultivator!

What kind of play-pretend was this!?

The head of the Four Death Gods was playing god and committing crimes while the other three were his bodyguards!! The fact that he was able to live for so long was a miracle in itself!

He hadn't even the time to say what was on his mind with all the shock going through his head.

“Eldest brother! Eldest brother!!” Never Die's attempts to save the man was useless.

Bereaved by the death of his brother, Never Die turned to snarl at Bai Yunfei, “You know his nickname is ‘Insta Die,’ yet you still attacked him. Of course he'd die!!”

“.....”

Chapter 293: Strength is as Shown

The Four Death Gods were true to their name—the eldest most definitely. Insta Die had indeed been killed in one shot.

This development felt slightly nonsensical, but Bai Yunfei managed to adapt to the situation fast enough.

While the three men were still despairing over the death of their brothers, Bai Yunfei immediately shot away, landing next to Big Dagger and Little Dagger.

“This one is named Bai Yunfei, a student of the Crafting School. Please don’t be afraid, I am not your enemy.” Seeing that the two men were holding their weapons vigilantly in front of them when Bai Yunfei approached, Bai Yunfei moved his spear behind him to denote his friendliness, and he introduced himself to make himself less suspicious.

“Crafting School?” Han Chong questioned in surprise. As was common sense in the world, he couldn’t take Bai Yunfei’s words at face value, so he didn’t drop his guard around Bai Yunfei. Though he concluded that Bai Yunfei had not come to help the Four Death Gods since he had just killed one of them.

The only question that remained to be seen was whether or not Bai Yunfei would try to help the Flying Dagger brothers before backstabbing them for the final spoils.

Han Chong had some doubts about that question too. If that was indeed the case, then Bai Yunfei’s appearance in the fight would be a little ‘early.’ Furthermore...

“A late-stage Soul Warrior?”

Han Chong nearly doubted what he was feeling for a moment. A late-stage Soul Warrior was an incredibly weak soul cultivator in this battle, just what business did he have poking his nose here!?

“That’s not right! When he first came out... that definitely wasn’t

the strength of a Soul Warrior. Even Han Lin wouldn't be able to move as fast as he did." Han Chong thought. "But... I can't feel any elements from his body. Is he just so strong that I can't even sense it?"

He dismissed the thought with a shake of his head. It was far too nonsensical to accept.

"Ah, so you are, sire Bai..." Han Chong nodded politely. "We have never met before, I'm sure. Might I inquire why you are helping us brothers?"

Bai Yunfei took a look at the man. Han Chong had a skinny, but handsome face with eyes that revealed his intelligent and calm demeanor. "Well... let's take care of the remaining three before I say anything more. Don't worry, I won't try to fight for your prize."

The last part was spoken partly in jest, but Han Chong didn't say anything more. He turned his eyes back to his enemies.

Over there, the three remaining Death Gods had gathered around each other; each one glaring daggers at Bai Yunfei with murderous auras.

"Brat, I'll make you pay for taking our eldest brother's life away!!"

Never Die howled. His giant blade rose into the air, activating his armament skill like before. The power in this skill was several times stronger than before. The three blades materialized in the air with a hundred meters between each blade, surrounding Bai Yunfei and the other two!

Must Die and Go Die gave each other a look of tacit agreement while Never Die was preparing to strike. The sword in Go Die's hand detached from the middle as a wave of soulforce exploded from him, extending the weapon with an orange light. He then stabbed it into the ground.

While Go Die was extending his sword, Must Die was doing something strange with his feet before he sunk into the ground!

A wave of orange light came from Go Die's feet and transformed into a tidal wave of earth. From where Must Die was hidden in the earth, a small bump could be seen as he 'swam' toward Bai Yunfei to attack!

In their fury, the three Death Gods were now using their strongest killing moves to fight this battle!!

The three blades dragged across the ground as well, leaving behind a trench of dirt in their wakes. Han Chong's pupils expanded slightly in shock before he dove for Han Lin, trying to push him out of the way again.

Then a pair of hands touched the shoulders of both brothers, revealing Bai Yunfei behind them with a smile. "Allow me to deal with this."

"You!!"

Han Chong didn't why Bai Yunfei was so unflustered, but what he did know was that Bai Yunfei was preventing the two from moving!!

The three of them had lost their chance of dodging because of a moment's hesitation. The attacks of their enemies were already upon them.

Despair and anger flooded Han Chong's eyes; he didn't know what to do, but what he could do was stay angry at Bai Yunfei since he had stopped the two brothers from dodging.

Bai Yunfei continued to smile as if there wasn't any danger. After he stopped Han Lin and Han Chong, he moved forward to greet the incoming attacks from all around with a spirited look.

"Bzz..."

The sound of something vibrating made its way into Han Lin and

Han Chong's ears, causing them to look to the source. A bubble of orange light surrounded the three of them. Right above Bai Yunfei's head, an equally orange light was creating the orange glow around them.

The Cataclysmic Seal!!

“Boom!!”

Now on the verge of collision, the fearsome blades of metallic energy collided with the area around Bai Yunfei along with many stone spikes.

The snarl on Never Die's face soon turned to a expression of satisfaction with his vengeance enacted. Just as he prepared to recollect himself, the look on his face froze as he realized an issue, “What... but how!?”

Casting his soulsense out, Never Die realized that the auras of the three people were still there—vibrant and strong as ever!

What did that mean? It meant that the combined killing moves of the three Death Gods didn't do a thing to them!

From within the orange light, Han Chong and Han Lin were staring in dumbfounded shock at the earthen barrier erected around them. Neither of the two spoke for some time, but as a late-stage Soul Ancestor, Han Chong was at a complete loss of words by this inconceivable sight.

Bai Yunfei let out a discrete sigh of relief where he stood, but not because he blocked the attack. Blocking the attack was within his expectations—if it couldn't, then the Cataclysmic Seal would be considered a disgrace to every mid-heaven tier soul armament. What he was really worried about harm to the essence fireseed inside it. From what he saw, nothing had changed, so Bai Yunfei felt as though he had been worrying over nothing.

“Bang!!”

There was a slightly weaker sound from beneath his feet, causing

the ground to tremble slightly. Both of Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up with murderous intent, and right in front of the still surprised eyes of Han Lin and Han Chong, Bai Yunfei's Fire-tipped Spear stabbed a meter into the ground!

The spear slid into the ground without resistance for almost an entire meter, and then...

“Boom!!”

An even louder sound than before rocked the area.

Mixed into the explosion, the agonizing screams of a person could be heard.

Bai Yunfei had used the Threefold Stab. It didn't matter when the explosive effect of the spear would activate since he had manipulated the range of the barrier to protect him from the backlash of the explosion.

Never Die and Go Die stared at the source of the explosion for a brief moment in confusion. The dust cloud that had been kicked up earlier was dispersed by Bai Yunfei's fiery strike, allowing the two to see that Bai Yunfei and the Han brothers were completely unharmed, and right in front of Bai Yunfei, a three-to-four-meter-long hole could be seen.

Suddenly, the ground in the area exploded with dirt, spitting out the person that had been hiding below! With a bang, the person tumbled to the ground. It was Must Die, but he was in a tragic state of being. His entire person was a charcoal black, and his clothes were torn apart.

What was even more frightful was that his right arm was completely gone!!

His right shoulder was pitch-black, and a heavy flow of dark-red blood streamed from the stump and pooled on the ground.

“Third brother!!”

Blanching at the sight, Never Die flew to Must Die's side and grabbed his right shoulder. A moment later, a bubble of elemental water started to spread from Never Die's palm to Must Die's shoulder stump, immediately starting the clotting process. With no more blood flowing from the stump, the contorted face of Must Die's died down—but not completely. Even now, the fear in his eyes could still be seen.

Go Die's reaction was slightly slower than Never Die's, but he still rushed toward Bai Yunfei for a surprise attack with his mother and son sword.

"I didn't kill him; what a shame..." Bai Yunfei lamented, but he didn't bother fighting Go Die. Han Lin and Han Chong were still in stunned silence behind him, and Bai Yunfei didn't feel like fighting a two on one battle.

Bai Yunfei's sigh snapped both brothers out of their stupefaction. Han Lin stared at Bai Yunfei. Bai Yunfei was roughly the same age as him and slightly more attractive to boot, but Han Lin looked as though he was seeing a ghost while he stared at Bai Yunfei. "You... this... but how! What... what the..."

Han Lin's brother was much calmer. Instead of saying anything, Han Chong looked at Bai Yunfei's eyes with a look of disbelief.

Taking two steps behind so that he could stand shoulder to shoulder with the brothers, Bai Yunfei ignored the looks they were giving him to stare at the enemy instead. "Shall we give the finishing blow to them?" He asked.

A flash of light arced across Han Chong's eyes.

It took Han Chong a second to get his mind back into shape. He said, "Of course! Han Lin, let's go!"

Chapter 294: And Another Death!

When Han Chong said ‘go,’ he didn’t mean to literally go forward. He meant it as a command to start their counterattack. At his intonation, three flying daggers were sent flying from his hands, like arrows shot from a bow. As they traveled through the air, a glow of elemental wind could be seen aiding their forward impetus.

His younger brother immediately followed suit with three of his own flying daggers. The first three daggers were trailed by the daggers thrown by Han Lin. Han Lin’s daggers were hidden from the three men’s line of sight.

Must Die was heavily injured, but the other two weren’t. They were vigilant as the six daggers came flying toward them. Never Die’s eyes narrowed as he formulated a plan. His left hand held Must Die down while his right hand brandished his golden sword in front of them. With a series of clanging sounds, he deflected all three of the flying daggers thrown by Han Chong, but the ones thrown by Han Lin continued to fly undisturbed.

This was a plan the two brothers often used. When they threw a flying dagger, the other brother would wait a bit before throwing their own to catch their enemies off guard.

However, Go Die hadn’t been caught off guard. His mother and son sword flew into action, and he knocked down the three remaining daggers without much trouble.

“Han Lin, Bolt!”

Naturally, Han Chong figured that this plan wouldn’t work against the three, so he took advantage of when the three enemies were guarding themselves to pass a quick message to his brother. Simultaneously, his right hand shook as he pulled out a violet-colored flying dagger.

The dagger was barely seven inches long, and the point was almost as thin as a needle. Additionally, the edge of the dagger made a sharp turn in before making another diagonal turn in its original direction.

With a closer observation, the flying dagger looked like a violet-colored lightning bolt.

By the time the three Death Gods had finished knocking away the last three flying daggers, Han Chong and Han Lin were already priming their next attacks. Han Chong let loose the lightning-bolt shaped dagger, and Han Lin followed up half a beat later. Two violet streaks of lights flew forth.

There was something curious about these daggers. When they were tossed, they didn't follow a linear trajectory. Instead, they traveled in a jagged zig-zag path with several minute permutations every meter. There was a hundred meter difference between the two sides, and the two daggers were almost reminiscent of lightning bolts as they shot straight for Never Die and Go Die!

As one of the targets, Never Die's pupils dilated while trying to concentrate. Since the daggers were flying with irregular trajectories, he wasn't sure if the target was him or Must Die right next to him.

To simplify things, Never Die's right hand pushed Must Die out of the way with great force.

Then, with a slight step forward, Never Die lifted his sword in front of him. The broadside of his sword faced the daggers.

But right under his very eyes, the daggers traveled underneath his blade, and one of them shot into the unprotected segment of his left shoulder!

“Pfft!”

A slight grunt of pain was heard as the dagger embedded itself deep enough into his flesh, penetrating into the bone.

Another grunt could be heard at the same time from Never Die's right. The other target, Must Die, hadn't been able to evade the second dagger fast enough, so he was stabbed by it in the left part of his waist.

Though they were hit by the attacks, Never Die couldn't help but slightly relax knowing that they were minor daggers rather than killing moves. If he had to guess, this was probably a tactic to buy some time for them to recover some strength.

As he was preparing to launch a counterattack, he suddenly saw a bright flash of blue light from the corner of his eyes...

"Aaaah!!"

A scream filled with pain caused Never Die to stiffen. Turning his head, he saw Must Die's head bent down, looking at the bloody hole in his chest.

Must Die's head tilted back up to look helplessly at Never Die—his mouth opening to say something, but nothing came out.

Then, he fell down.

"Zzzzk!" Just ten meters away, a flash of blue shot into the ground.

Glacial Pricker!

On the other side, Bai Yunfei's right hand fell to his side as he nodded at the two brothers.

Bai Yunfei had taken advantage of when the two had used their daggers to land a 'surprise attack' on Must Die with the Glacial Pricker!

"You... you...!" Disbelief grabbed hold of Never Die for a brief moment. In time, his eyes turned bloodshot as he glared at Bai Yunfei. By this point, the expression on his face couldn't even be described as just malevolent anymore.

"I'll give you a slow death!!!"

His left hand reached up to pull out the dagger embedded in his shoulder. There was a splurt of blood as the dagger was pulled out, but a flash of blue light immediately stopped more blood from coming out.

Dragging his sword against the ground as he charged, Never Die flew straight for Bai Yunfei. His feet came up and down on the ground every second. The wound in his shoulder was already fully healed.

Bai Yunfei would never underestimate Never Die. Though the man was already running low on soulforce and wasn't in peak shape, Never Die was still a late-stage Soul Ancestor. Even more convincing was his freakish healing ability.

One of Bai Yunfei's feet shifted slightly on the ground. He wasn't going to fight the man head-on, rather he would retreat. He had the late-stage Soul Ancestor, Han Chong, on his side, there wasn't a need for him to be a 'try-hard.'

Bai Yunfei's sudden retreat confused Han Chong, but he took up the vanguard without delay. Now that he was positioned in front, Han Chong's right hand shook as he retrieved yet another one of his daggers. This time, it wasn't one of his more special ones, but an ordinary flying dagger. He would use it to stall Never Die's forward advancement.

On the other side, Han Lin threw yet another dagger to stop Never Die from advancing as well.

Around ten daggers were thrown at every angle to stop Never Die, but the man had no intentions of evading them. His sword came out in front and parried three of the daggers coming for his head, but he didn't even try to stop any of the other ones.

The sound of daggers stabbing into flesh could be heard several times as his abdomen, chest, and even thighs were pierced. However, the man didn't even look as if he felt pain—much to Bai Yunfei's amazement. Even after being stabbed multiple times,

Never Die continued to charge full speed at the one he was hatefully glaring at.

A bone-chilling sensation crawled up Bai Yunfei's spine...

Since Han Chong had failed to do anything to stop the man, it was clear to see that he too was surprised by Never Die's actions. In no time at all, Never Die had reached Han Chong with his sword heaved up high to prepare for a mighty cleave!!

"Let me!"

From behind, Han Chong heard someone call out to him. From in front, a layer of orange light suddenly erected itself to protect him.

Never Die's weapon clanged against the light before being repelled!

At almost the same exact time, the furious sensation of heat brushed past Han Chong's ears and a flashing spear of fire stabbed the area next to his face, delivering a stroke into Never Die's stomach!!

Eyes dilating in shock, Never Die was stunned. He hadn't thought that the late-stage Soul Warrior, Bai Yunfei, would have the cheek to launch an attack straight after his own. Bai Yunfei being a strong enemy hadn't even occurred to Never Die, but even he could see that the spear in front of him wasn't your average soul armament. It was extremely strong. Shifting his feet, Never Die tried his best to move back and bring his sword up to protect his stomach.

"Chiinggg!"

The crisp song of metal hitting metal erupted into the air.

The Fire-tipped Spear had stabbed at the sword and managed to stab half an inch into the blade—practically stabbing straight through the sword itself.

Never Die took three hurried steps back with his eyes widening in

shock.

On the other side, Bai Yunfei's eyes revealed his disappointment. He had been hoping that the Threefold Stab would've activated the explosion effect of the spear.

What a pity.

Chapter 295: A Violent Attack!

Though the explosion effect of the Threefold Stab failed to activate, Bai Yunfei didn't plan on stopping his attack. While Never Die was busy dealing with the knockback from the spear, Bai Yunfei immediately commanded the Cataclysmic Seal to strike.

He didn't use its +13 effect for two reasons.

The first reason was because he was worried about its soulforce consumption.

The second reason was because he was worried about potentially damaging the essence fireseed. He simply couldn't allow anything to happen to it, even something extremely small.

“Clank!!”

The Cataclysmic Seal slammed against the blade in Never Die's hand, causing its owner to stagger back yet again. The brick returned to a spot above Bai Yunfei's head.

When Never Die took a step back, so did Han Chong. A long-ranged battle was how he preferred to fight, making use of all his strength.

Bai Yunfei followed suit with Han Chong.

With a swing of his arm, Han Chong released two more greenish blurs of light to help Han Lin force back Go Die. In no time at all, Han Lin, Han Chong, and Bai Yunfei managed to widen the distance between them and their enemies by a hundred meters.

Never Die and Must Die were back together as well. The flesh where several daggers had hit Never Die was contracting and expanding, trying to push out the embedded daggers. When the daggers were forced out, a blue light surrounded Never Die's body, staunching the blood and healing the wounds.

Widening the distance between the two sides symbolized the

start of a long-ranged battle of suppression. No matter how angry Never Die was or how determined he was to tear Bai Yunfei's body to bits, he had no chance to attack. Han Chong would constantly throw one dagger after another, preventing Never Die from advancing. Many of the daggers managed to stab Never Die, but the ones that were aimed at his eyes or throat were constantly avoided.

He was called 'Never Die,' but that didn't literally mean he couldn't die. It was only a nickname given to him by those not part of the soul cultivator world. By depending on an extremely strong soul skill that could heal him, Never Die was granted an extraordinary advantage in the form of being able to heal any wounds instantaneously. Unless he was instantly killed or had run out of soulforce, he could indeed be said to 'never die,' but that was it.

One hour had passed since the start of this battle against the equally strong Han Chong with Never Die's fellow three brethren (now only one). Right now, Never Die suffered the sensation of being suffocated.

All of his battles in the past had relied on a self-sacrificing style of fighting. He would exchange injuries with his opponents, sending them to their deaths while he healed. Sometimes, he'd even pretend to be killed by his enemy's killing move before unleashing a secret attack.

Han Chong had never let Never Die get close to him, so how could he utilize either of his usual two tactics?

In addition, there was now Bai Yunfei to worry about. Despite Bai Yunfei not being strong enough for Never Die to care about, the Fire-tipped Spear and the Cataclysmic Seal concerned to him. He had tried to attack twice with his sword's ability, but the Cataclysmic Seal deflected it twice, causing Never Die to reevaluate Bai Yunfei.

Han Chong and Han Lin were throwing dagger after dagger with seamless transition between throws, and right behind, Bai Yunfei's eyes flickered with a strange light. It seemed like he was thinking about something.

“Whoosh!”

From the side, a ray of orange light suddenly shot into view. Blanching at the sight, Han Lin dove two steps to the left and earned himself a cut into his shoulder.

Between Go Die and Han Lin, Han Lin was the weaker of the two. The mid-stage Soul Ancestor had finally found an opening in Han Lin's barrage. Go Die managed to not only inflict a light wound on him, but he also managed to draw in close!

“Han Lin!” Han Chong cried out. Just as he prepared to help his younger brother, a flash of green light shot past him. Following that green blade of light, several more gusts of wind blew forward to stop Go Die from getting any closer.

The Crescent Moon Blade!

Slamming his left foot down to slow down, Go Die's other foot rotated his body, and the Crescent Moon Blade barely scraped past his ear.

His sword danced in his hands as he parried the three gusts of wind.

He was still determined to grab ahold of Han Lin. When the orange light from his body mixed with the green light from the wind blades, his body flickered slightly before even more orange light started to erupt; he was preparing an extremely strong strike.

“Be careful about your behind!”

Just as he was about to unleash an attack on Han Lin, a warning from Never Die suddenly made its way into his ears.

He hadn't any time to think. Relying completely on his trust in

Never Die, Go Die gave up his attack to dive to the side.

The moment he dove, a chilling flash of green light scraped past his face, scratching him and drawing some blood.

As the blood trickled down his face, Go Die felt a shiver crawl up his spine. If he had taken a single moment more to dodge, his entire body would've been bisected!!

The unique property of the Crescent Moon Blade, where it could act as a boomerang, was something many people wouldn't expect. Not many could predict that such a move was possible at first, and if not for Never Die's warning, Go Die really would've lost his life.

Even though he managed to evade the unexpected danger that nearly befell him, Go Die had lost the opportunity to kill Han Lin.

Furthermore... he had fallen into yet another trap!!

Having lost his balance due to throwing himself to the side, Go Die's panicked head turned to look up just in time to see what appeared to be an orange shooting star come smashing down!

There wasn't time to dodge. All Go Die could do was grit his teeth and cross his arms in front of him to prepare for impact.

With a boom, his body was slammed backwards after the Cataclysmic Seal smashed into him. A stab of pain shot up his arms as he slid across the ground. Even though he wasn't injured, Go Die felt as if the bones in his arms had snapped.

The Cataclysmic Seal returned to Bai Yunfei, only for the Crescent Moon Blade to come whirling at Go Die before he could even relax!

Eyes widening in surprise, Go Die rolled across the ground desperate to dodge.

If a late-stage Soul Ancestor could be reduced to such a state, one could see how much he was being overwhelmed.

When he slapped the ground to get back up onto his feet, Go Die

felt a searing pain in his left thigh and smelt the pungent scent of blood. Looking down, he realized that Han Chong had thrown yet another one of those lightning bolt shaped daggers at his leg!

“Whoosh whoosh whoosh!”

The sounds of even more daggers flying through the air could be heard, causing Go Die to look up again. Han Lin was already throwing three more of them!!

Twisting his body to weave around the daggers, Go Die managed to dodge the one meant for this throat, but his abdomen and left shoulder were struck!

Stiffening from the pain, Go Die's left leg staggered a half-step back. His eyes reflected his fear, but even then, his right leg made a forceful push so that he could retreat.

“Swish!”

This time, a string of golden light shot toward him, prompting him to reflexively bring his arm up to defend himself. Rather than continue forward, the golden light bent around his right arm and immediately coiled around it several times!

As soon as it tightened around his arm, a powerful tug could be felt. Then, Go Die felt his feet leave the ground, and he was flying forward!

“Pfft!!”

While Go Die's body was airborne, a spear with fire around it stabbed straight through his back.

In Bai Yunfei's left hand was the Compliant Rope, and in his right hand, the Fire-tipped Spear.

He had stabbed Go Die's heart straight through!

Thanks to a chain of motions and the teamwork between Han Lin and Han Chong, yet another person was killed!!

Chapter 296: Attacking the Enemy Together

“Fourth brother!”

Never Die’s eyes had nearly leaped out of his sockets when he saw Bai Yunfei kill yet another one of his brothers. He swung his sword at Han Chong, who had thrown yet another one of his lightning-bolt-shaped daggers, and drew blood from Han Chong’s left shoulder. Despite that, Never Die didn’t bother to attack Han Chong again. Instead, he shot straight for Bai Yunfei with the speed of a newly-launched arrow!

“Die! I’ll bury you with my brothers!!” Snarling, Never Die swung his sword down to deliver a tremendous wave of energy in the direction of Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei didn’t really care just how deep the familial ties of the Four Death Gods went. Tang Xinyun had called them criminals with crimes so heavy death wouldn’t be enough to wipe the slate clean.

“Hah, so even you can feel grief? When you killed people before, did you ever think about their family members!?” Bai Yunfei sneered. Twirling his spear, Bai Yunfei threw the body of Go Die onto the ground. Commanding the Cataclysmic Seal, Bai Yunfei erected a barrier around him to stop the wave of energy coming at him.

The next moment, the energy wave collided with the barrier, causing the surrounding area to blow up.

Bai Yunfei was left unharmed in his barrier.

A flash of light danced across Bai Yunfei’s eyes. Never Die was angrier than ever with the death of his brothers, but the power behind his attacks was clearly much weaker than before.

“You’re at the end of your rope...” Bai Yunfei sighed. With a wave of his left hand, the Crescent Moon Blade started to vibrate.

From the other side, the other pair behind Never Die started to exude a chilling aura as it spun. In a single fluid motion, it shot straight for Never Die's back.

At the same time, the Cataclysmic Seal let loose a burst of fire before traveling toward Never Die's chest with the Crescent Moon Blade.

Bai Yunfei never would've fought a head-on battle with Never Die if the man had been at his peak strength. He had once experienced the taste of power that a late-stage Soul Ancestor possessed, back during his time in Curopia City.

As things were, Never Die was at the very most at fifty percent of his optimal strength. Han Chong and Han Lin were at hand as well, so Bai Yunfei could take it easy. Of course, he didn't think about having a close-combat battle just yet. The Crescent Moon Blade and the Cataclysmic Seal would do their job as long-range weapons and would protect him from attacks.

“Clank!!”

Moving his sword in front, Never Die managed to knock away the spinning Crescent Moon Blade before moving to the side. Though he tried to dodge the Cataclysmic Seal, it managed to graze his left shoulder.

There was a cracking sound from his bones before he grunted in pain, but it wasn't enough for him to stop his advance toward Bai Yunfei.

Before he could get far, a shot of violet light came from behind Bai Yunfei; Han Lin was providing support for him with one of his lightning bolt daggers. Never Die inched to the side so that the dagger would only strike his abdomen. Despite the wound, a flash of blue light was all it took for it to heal!

“Whoosh!” The second Crescent Moon Blade came flying back. It was being manipulated by Bai Yunfei. He was attempting to slice

through Never Die's throat with the blade while the Cataclysmic Seal looped around to strike the back of his head.

This time, Never Die had no other choice but to stop. He threw himself off to the side so that both soul armaments missed him.

The soul armaments flew around, and made yet another attempt to strike Never Die down.

“Clank! Whoosh!”

With his sword, Never Die managed to block the Cataclysmic Seal while allowing the Crescent Moon Blade to cut deep enough into his body to see bone. However, the wound healed up as fast as it was delivered.

However—

There was a difference this time.

The recovery rate of the wound was noticeably slower than before.

Bit by bit, Bai Yunfei was gaining control of the tempo of the battle. The Crescent Moon Blade still in his left hand was being waved gently like a conductor's wand as it controlled how the other Crescent Moon Blade moved. At the same time, he was controlling the Cataclysmic Seal, but controlling both objects at the same time wasn't too difficult a task for him. He was used to micromanaging many different materials when crafting equipment after all.

One after another, the two soul armaments continued to harass Never Die, who either dodged or parried the two. Soon Never Die managed to get within thirty meters of Bai Yunfei before he found himself unable to get any closer.

Yet another serious blow was delivered to him in the form of a cut from the Crescent Moon Blade. The Cataclysmic Seal was again blocked, but what prevented him from going even further was the reintroduction of Han Chong and Han Lin!!

Never Die found himself reevaluating Bai Yunfei because of how nimble and troublesome the Cataclysmic Seal and Crescent Moon Blades were. Not only was Bai Yunfei a huge problem, he was a problem he couldn't get away from.

Han Chong and Han Lin were already enough to overwhelm the three brothers. With Bai Yunfei here and his other two brothers dead, things were extremely dire now. If he hadn't lost himself to his anger and tried to attack Bai Yunfei, he could've escaped with his life if he tried.

But it was too late to escape now.

“Bang!”

Once more, the Cataclysmic Seal slammed against Never Die's sword and forced the man back two steps. Having been knocked into the path of the Crescent Moon Blade, Never Die was just about to move when, all of a sudden, his face blanched in surprise!!

A flash of red light burst from the Cataclysmic Seal, giving birth to a string of flames! The coil of flames stretched past his blade and coiled around his arm before tightening onto it!!

+10 additional effect; the Flame Twister, activated!!

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to activate 'Flame Twister' and restrict mobility of another by 10% for a maximum of ten seconds.

With the fire spreading around him, Never Die immediately tried to counter the fire with a burst of elemental water from his body. In the five elements, water subdued fire, so according to logic, the strands of fire around him should've been dispelled.

To his shock, the fire didn't even weaken by a single degree!!

And furthermore...

“Whoosh!!”

A gleam of metal flashed into view as the Crescent Moon Blade left a deep cut in his right shoulder. According to his usual speed, dodging the Crescent Moon Blade at that speed should've been more than doable!!

“I’m... slower now!!” That single thought flashed across Never Die’s mind. He knew something was wrong with his body; it was most likely because of the strange fire wrapped around his arm, but... how could it have such an effect!?

From far away, Han Chong sensed that the movements of Never Die were irregular. Seeing his chance, Han Chong cried out, “Han Lin, flicker!”

From ten meters to the left, Han Lin immediately tossed the dagger in his hand. Concentrating, he took out a flying dagger that was shaped like the wing of a cicada. It was half an inch wide and three inches long with a metal that was almost transparent. Han Lin tossed the flying dagger with no hesitation!

At the same time, an identical-shaped dagger was thrown by Han Chong.

The daggers were thrown with absolute swiftness, but no sound came forth. As soon as the daggers left the hands of their owners, they simply... disappeared!!

Bai Yunfei raised an eyebrow in curiosity. When the two daggers disappeared, he felt the slightest feeling to turn toward Never Die.

From the other side, Never Die was paying close attention when the two brothers threw their daggers. He had been planning on using the trajectory and speed of the daggers to predict when and where to dodge, but the daggers had disappeared!

“Wha—” Almost unable to even think about what was happening, Never Die could only see was two flashes of green light right in front of him. Like apparitions, the two daggers suddenly appeared without warning; one was aimed at his heart, the other at

his throat!!

Eyes dilating in shock, Never Die leaned his head to the side to dodge one of the daggers and let it fly past his throat. The dagger nicked him in the neck and just barely missed a major artery!

“Pfthtt!!”

He failed to dodge the other dagger because he was so focused on dodging the dagger flying toward his neck. As a result, the dagger shot through his chest and exited out of his back. Paling in the face, Never Die felt his lifeforce start to slip away. A flash of blue light started to glow from where the hole was in his body. The more Never Die concentrated, the more the elemental water started to materialize around his wound, treating the near-fatal wound.

In no time at all, the wound started to heal, leaving Never Die with a thoroughly sweaty body from the healing effort.

Before he could start feeling happy, yet another event immediately caused him to grow shocked!

Yet another ring of fire with a spear right through its center was about to stab him straight through the chest!!

The confusion of Never Die served as an opportunity for Bai Yunfei to strike. Traveling fast with the Wave Treading Steps, Bai Yunfei made use of when Never Die was healing to unleash a strike with the Threefold Stab!!

Unable to dodge, all Never Die could do was try to bring his sword up and hope that he'd be able to make it in time to block.

“Bakiin!!”

The Fire-tipped Spear stabbed straight through the blade and continued to stab into Never Die's flesh. Never Die fell just slightly as he tried to retreat, but then...

“Boom!!”

In front of his very eyes, Never Die watched the ring of elemental fire on the spear suddenly explode. The sword in his hand shattered into many differing sized fragments, reducing his chest to a mangled mess!

The +10 effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, activated!

The explosive force of the explosion forced Never Die off his feet and into the air. As he flew, a spray of blood escaped his mouth. His eyes were wide with shock, and the elemental water in his body was trying its best to heal his wounds as fast as possible, but the wounds this time were far too severe. The wounds—while still healing relatively fast—no longer healed instantaneously like before.

“Bang!” The sound of something else made its way into Never Die’s ears, causing him to feel surprised again. Looking to the source, he saw Bai Yunfei suddenly leap into the air right above where he was. The Fire-tipped Spear was gone from his hands, but in its place, a flaming blade about two meters long traveled down the length of his arm before cleaving into Never Die!

His weapon was already broken, his body airborne, and his wounds not yet healed—how could he possibly dodge this?

“Noooo!!!”

Despair flooded Never Die’s eyes as he let loose the very last cry of regret he’d ever voice in his life. The weakening blue glow of light in his chest was soon engulfed by the flames of fire...

Chapter 297: A Deal

“Bang! Bang!”

Two scorched halves of flesh smashed into the ground. Never Die had been bisected in half by the waist!!

His regenerating soul skill could defy the heavens, but even that wasn't enough to reverse the rotations of the heavens. When Never Die's soulforce ran out, so would his life.

Landing back on the ground, Bai Yunfei waved his right hand to dissipate the Flame Winged Blade. The Cataclysmic Seal flew forward to absorb any remaining fire in the area; including the fires that were still burning on the two parts of Never Die.

“Whew...”

Sighing, Bai Yunfei recalled the other half of the Crescent Moon Blade. With a ‘kaching,’ the two Crescent Moon Blades connected with one another before being absorbed back into his space ring. Looking around for the Glacial Pricker, Bai Yunfei walked over to where it was and picked it up. The Cataclysmic Seal continued to float around him with a faint red light glowing around it.

.....

From where they stood, Han Chong and Han Lin stared at the approaching Bai Yunfei in surprise. When Bai Yunfei had first appeared, he had killed one of the Four Death Gods, and then the other three were soon killed off by him as well!!

They no longer doubted that Bai Yunfei was from the Crafting School now. The Cataclysmic Seal, the Fire-tipped Spear, the Flameblade Bracer, the Crescent Moon Blade, the Compliant Rope, the Glacial Pricker, and even that flying soul armament... there were so many strong soul armaments of varying uniqueness. The first three were the most terrifying to the two brothers, so even if Bai Yunfei didn't say he was from the Crafting School, the two

brothers would've come to the same conclusion either way.

“Sire Bai, thank you for your assistance.” Han Chong politely spoke as he strode forward to greet Bai Yunfei formally. Though Bai Yunfei still felt like he was a late-stage Soul Warrior, he didn't doubt that Bai Yunfei was hiding his strength.

“Perhaps there is some sort of method to hide your strength...” Han Chong guessed.

Bai Yunfei returned his greeting with a salute of his own. “There's no need to be so polite, brother Han. I was only passing by; even if I didn't participate, the four of them would still be no match for you two.”

“Haha... Sire Bai, while that may be true, the two of us would still have to work extremely hard I'm afraid. Even then, I'm sure we wouldn't be able to kill them all. Sire Bai, you killed all four of them so easily. Your help was a great deal of service for us...” Han Chong replied. He hesitated after that final word before continuing to say, “Sire Bai, the authorities of this province have warranted a bounty for the Four Death Gods...”

Before he could finish saying what he wanted to say, Bai Yunfei's hand came up to stop him. “No need. I said it before, brother Han. I'm not here to take your bounty.”

Bai Yunfei knew that the bounty for the four criminals wasn't low by any means and that it wasn't limited to just money alone. The bounty included many primal stones and even soul skills, but Bai Yunfei didn't plan on ‘contesting’ the two brothers for it. Even Never Die's space ring failed to hold interest for him.

He only wanted to show his good faith...

“I see...” Han Chong was secretly happy that the bounty wouldn't need to be split, but he was also skeptical. If Bai Yunfei wanted nothing and risked his life to help them kill three Soul Ancestors, that'd be... well, a little ‘too’ kind.

“He isn’t here for their loot or for their bounty, and I highly doubt he’s here for a grudge. Is he here for divine justice then? As if...” The twenty-something year old Han Lin accidentally muttered what he was thinking about out loud.

“Han Lin!” Han Chong scolded. What Han Lin said was far too frank. Han Chong was afraid that Bai Yunfei would take offense.

“Haha, brother Han Lin isn’t off the mark. I’m not a person that would try to exact divine justice...” Bai Yunfei waved his hand nonchalantly. “I actually helped you because I had something in mind.”

“Oh?” Han Chong asked rather suspiciously, “Sire Bai, then you’re...”

Rather than answer what Han Chong was about to say, Bai Yunfei smiled and started to say something else.

“The Twisting Knives, 4.15 inches long. The principal material to make this dagger is the tailbone of a twisted snake. Two daggers are made at once, and when thrown together, their power is doubled...

“The Lightning Bolt Knife, made from a lightning ore with a lightning type primal stone and a soul crystal for its outer shape. 3.26 inches long, a turn of .1 inch in the middle, and an incline of...

“The Flickering Knife, made from a transparent ore with any primal stone or soul crystal as a complementary. Has a length of...

“The Arcing Knife, made from a wind ore with a wind primal stone or soul crystal for its outer shape. Has a width of .1 inch and an arc of...

“The Dirtbreaker Knife...

“The Butterfly Knife...”

The very first line Bai Yunfei said startled Han Chong and Han Lin. Three of the more particular daggers they had used in that

battle were named by him, and he continued to say even more information. Soon Han Lin couldn't stay quiet any longer.

“How... how do you know about that!” He exclaimed.

Han Chong was surprised too. Pulling his brother away from Bai Yunfei, a Lightning Bolt Dagger made its way into his hand. “Who are you!?” He demanded of Bai Yunfei, “And how do you know about those?”

Placing his hands on his hips, Bai Yunfei continued to smile in the same strange manner as usual. “No need for such alarm, brothers. I really am from the Crafting School, and I bear no ill will.”

Han Chong relaxed a little because of Bai Yunfei's calmness, but not enough to fully drop his guard. “Sir, how did you come to learn about what you just said, and why have you brought this up now?”

“I wish to make a deal with you two brothers.”

“A deal?”

“That's correct,” Bai Yunfei nodded. “I won't delay this any longer. I came across a partially ruined manual by accident a long time ago; in it was writing describing how to craft several particular throwing knives. What I just said was from a small segment of this manual... would you brothers be interested?”

“What did you say!?” Completely unexpected to Bai Yunfei, Han Chong suddenly blurted out loud, “You have the Flying Dagger Compendium!”

Interest flashed across Bai Yunfei's eyes. Nodding, he pulled out the incomplete manual. Holding it in front of the two brothers, he did a quick flip through the contents before fastening it together.

With their eyesight, the two brothers would surely be able to gleam some information of the contents.

Bai Yunfei still displayed a smile on his face, but his body was

ready for any sudden movements from either of the two brothers. He was honest about wanting a trade, but he couldn't be sure that they didn't have any ill intentions.

That's why he didn't put away the Cataclysmic Seal.

"It's no wonder he knew so much about the daggers... all of the details in that manual. He knows even more about it than we do!! The treasure lost to our school for many centuries was in his hands all along!" The shock Han Chong was feeling was easily reflected on his face. There was no way Bai Yunfei knew just how important the manual was to Han Chong and Han Lin; to be frank, the two brothers would've tried to steal it back if not for the fact that Bai Yunfei didn't seem like a bad guy and was also a student of the Crafting School.

Even though they couldn't steal it back, Bai Yunfei was willing to trade it. That was enough to fill them with excitement.

It took half a moment to calm themselves down, and Han Chong tried his best to stare calmly at Bai Yunfei. "What deal might sir Bai want with us?"

Disinclined to mince words, Bai Yunfei said, "I want the matching details missing to this manual!"

Chapter 298: Orchid Town

“Alright, we accept!!”

Han Chong immediately agreed to Bai Yunfei’s trade proposal.

Han Chong’s immediate answer surprised Bai Yunfei. Bai Yunfei didn’t have a clear understanding of the worth of the manual, but he was sure what he was asking from the other party would’ve been worth quite the price. They were talking about the family or school, who would trade them away just like that?

Prior to this, Bai Yunfei felt that he should’ve thrown in a few soul armaments in exchange, but who would have thought that the two brothers would accept the deal without even making a ‘counteroffer’?

“Does this mean that... the details on how to use these ‘flying daggers’ aren’t worth as much?” He thought that at first, but then it was dismissed just as quickly as it came. Just a few pages that talked about learning how to strike at certain acupoints with the flying daggers would’ve been priceless to anyone.

Bai Yunfei once asked Zi Jin about learning these said acupoints, but no answer had been given. Zi Jin had only commented that no outsider would know.

“Looks like I undervalued this manual...” Bai Yunfei sighed. He wasn’t feeling too much regret though. As long as he got what he wanted, that’d be enough for him.

After Han Chong agreed, he took out a white jade slip. Feeding his soulforce into it, he placed the slightly glowing slip to his forehead and started to concentrate.

Memory slips...

They could retain information for a short while and were quite convenient to use. Their one shortcoming was how long the information was retained. They could only retain information for

five days at most before disappearing.

After fifteen minutes, the light surrounding the slip started to fade away. Opening his eyes, Han Chong looked at Bai Yunfei, “Sire Bai...” he started.

Bai Yunfei smiled in response. Gripping the manual, he tossed it into the air toward Han Chong. Since both sides had agreed to the deal, there was no need to hesitate. He had to be open about this deal, else the other side would start to doubt him.

It was now surprise that a smile appeared on Han Chong’s face as soon as he saw the manual flying over. With a toss of his right hand, the slip was thrown to Bai Yunfei. The two items crossed over one another before falling neatly into the other’s hands.

Taking the slip, Bai Yunfei inspected it briefly to confirm the contents. As soon as he confirmed the contents, he nodded his head at Han Chong and Han Lin, who were both looking over the manual. “Brothers, now that this trade is complete, I’ll be taking my leave. May we meet again, goodbye!”

Han Chong hadn’t expected Bai Yunfei to leave so soon, but he wasn’t in the mood to continue talking to Bai Yunfei either. Saluting Bai Yunfei in earnest, he replied, “May we meet again!!”

Bai Yunfei nodded. With a wave of his right hand, the Tempest Sword appeared right in front of him to board. In no time at all, he and the sword flew into the air in a burst of green light.

When Bai Yunfei’s figure disappeared behind the giant trees in the distance, Han Chong looked back at the ripped manual in his hands in silence.

“Second uncle, did you really give him our techniques?” Han Lin blurted out soon after.

“How many times have I told you already; don’t call me second uncle when we’re traveling. Call me brother; otherwise, people will think I’m old.” Han Chong snapped before slapping his chest.

“I, Han Chong, am a man who does things right. If he wants to have a trade, then I won’t cheat him. This... this is the manual the old man has been dreaming desperately about getting back. Using our techniques to barter for it is well worth the cost. With the entire manual, our techniques can be used to their maximum potential.

“The most important thing about the manual is that it describes the designs of the daggers and how to make them. Without those plans, the techniques are essentially worthless. If anything, we’re the ones that got the better end of the deal.”

“Oooh...” Han Lin nodded his head half-heartedly. His thoughts were never as complicated as Han Chong’s since Han Chong was normally the one who did all the planning whenever they traveled, so Han Lin decided not to worry about it anymore. Staring into the distance where Bai Yunfei disappeared, Han Lin had a second question. “Is he really from the Crafting School? They say that every student there is arrogant. That Bai Yunfei didn’t seem arrogant at all...”

“Rumors are always exaggerated.” Han Chong quirked his lips. “They say that we’ve never missed before. Is that true?”

“Not often at least...”

“Well, that’s that.”

.....

Tang Xinyun could be seen standing on top of a tree branch of a taller tree. She was peering through the cracks in the dense canopy. It was with worry that she was looking off into the distance where a battle was taking place. Since she couldn’t use her soulsense to peer further away, all she could see was the occasional flash of light whenever someone used the power of an element.

At one point while she watched, an intense flash of golden energy set off a loud explosion. Even though she was a good distance away

from the battle, the tremors caused by it were enough to shake the tree Tang Xinyun was standing in. Nervous, she clutched at the hems of her clothes. “Xiao Bai,” she lowered her head to look at the white bird perched on her shoulder, “can you sense anything from over there? Is Yunfei alright?”

The bird tilted its head to give Tang Xinyun a look, and then it looked off toward the battlefield. As if trying to tell Tang Xinyun that she shouldn’t worry, it chirped twice.

“Boom!!”

Another explosion went off; this time, it was a flash of red light.

The battlefield went silent again.

“Is it over?” Tang Xinyun muttered. She recognized the explosion as something Bai Yunfei had caused.

“Did he win?” Her face brightened up.

“Chirp!” Xiao Bai chirped in a way that seemed to confirm Tang Xinyun’s guess. Knowing that Bai Yunfei was no longer in danger, she finally let out a sigh of relief. The nervous look in her eyes receded, and she looked back at the battlefield, waiting for Bai Yunfei’s return.

A burst of green light flew toward her soon after, as expected. Like a shooting star, it quickly shot toward the tree she was hiding. It soon stopped in front of her, revealing Bai Yunfei. “Sorry for making you wait, Xinyun. It’s all done and dealt with, so let’s continue on our way!” He apologized with a smile.

Tang Xinyun nodded in return. She delicately leaped onto the sword from the tree branch, landing behind Bai Yunfei. From above, Xiao Bai landed on Tang Xinyun’s shoulder.

As soon as Bai Yunfei’s soulforce was fed into the sword, it took off again in a burst of light...

.....

One night four days later, a male and female arrived at a small town.

Under the warm rays of a setting sun, the two slowly walked through the streets of the town. The male wore gray robes that didn't cover his face, revealing a rather average-looking sight, but his eyes and forehead revealed a look of determination as he smiled and conversed with the young woman next to him.

The young woman looked to be of twenty years or so. Her long hair rolled down her white robes to her waist. While pretty in appearance, she wasn't stunningly beautiful, but her soft voice was pleasing to the ears. To the small town of Orchid, she was like a beautiful fairy with features that captivated the eyes of anyone that looked at her.

Even though the townspeople turned their heads her way, the female didn't seem to notice. She was caught up in the scenery around her and her conversation with the male about memories of the past.

The male and female were Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun, of course. It was getting dark, and the two felt it would be wise to stop here for the night and finish their journey tomorrow since Orchid Town was the closest town to Mo City.

"It's been a year since I was last here, but it doesn't feel like anything has changed. The uncle over there is still selling sesame cakes in the exact same place..." Tang Xinyun reminisced.

"When I was eighteen, the farthest I got from Mo City was Orchid Town. There's a mountain next to this town named Mt. Orchid. My mother's most favorite flowers, the butterfly orchids, could be found there. Every year, aunty Zhao would take me up there to pick a few..."

"Oh? You mean that purple-colored mountain over there to the north?" Bai Yunfei smiled, "Haha, is that mountain filled with a sea of orchids then? Why don't we pick a few tomorrow then?"

A small but lovely smile appeared on Tang Xinyun's hesitant face. "Yes."

Lazily stretching his body, Bai Yunfei laughed, "This town looked really small when we were flying over, but it's actually a little bigger than I thought... Xinyun, I'll go find us a place to stay for the night, you must be tired from all that traveling, right? Rest up well tonight so that you can be your best when you see your mother."

"Okay then..." Tang Xinyun nodded. "Let's head to the east, I remember aunty Zhao taking me that direction before..."

The two walked shoulder to shoulder down the path with Tang Xinyun smiling as she remembered memories of the past. She had a spring in her step as she walked. Time after time, she would point out an establishment to Bai Yunfei; like the rice dispensary that had once been the clothing store, the steamed bun seller with delectable steamed buns, or how that female walking down the road was actually the owner of the smithery just right around the corner. A single meter of distance was more than enough to greet Tang Xinyun with plenty of memories...

Her happiness was apparent to see to anyone. She normally wasn't as talkative as she was now, and Bai Yunfei listened to every single word she spoke in earnest. He'd nod his head at times rather than answer since he was happy just listening to her.

"Hey now! What day is it today? What brings a beautiful girl like you here? Am I just blessed to have good luck today?"

Just as Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun turned the corner, a suddenly voice called out to them from ahead, interrupting the conversation the two were having with each other.

Looking up, Bai Yunfei could see five burly men blocking the path up ahead. The man leading the group in the middle had triangular-shaped eyes that lecherously leered at Tang Xinyun.

No matter where in the world one went, bullies and hoodlums like him would be a common sight.

“Hehe, hey girl, you’re in luck. Our boss’s calling for you, c’mon over!” One of the men next to the first man darkly laughed.

Unwilling to drop the beat, another one of the five piped up, “Brother Xiong’s the strongest in Orchid Town. You ain’t goin’ to go wrong going with him.”

“Ain’t that right? That kid next to you looks like he’d be blown over by the wind! Take a look at our brother Xiong! Count yourself lucky brother Xiong’s calling for you, so be a good girl and c’mon over...”

With how much jeering and hooting the five were doing, it was clear that they saw Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun as easy targets just like everyone else in town did. When the townspeople saw what was going on, many of them quickly moved out of the way, indicating that this bully’s title of being the ‘strongest’ was most likely true.

Tang Xinyun’s eyebrows knit slightly together, and the smile on her face faded by just a shade.

Her previously happy trip down nostalgia lane was without a doubt hampered by these men.

Noticing the change in her demeanor and the increasing leers of the men, Bai Yunfei grew indignant in his heart. “I’ll give you three seconds to get lost. Make sure you don’t do anything you regret!!” He spoke icily.

“Er...” The five were taken aback by such an answer. Staring at Bai Yunfei incredulously, the five began to laugh out loud one after another.

“Haha!! This kid an idiot or what? You tryna threaten us!?”

“Hey, don’t try playin’ hero in front of your girl. Lemme tell ya, our brother Xiong could kill ya with a finger!”

“Nah, I could make him beg for his life myself!”

“Hey brat, lemme tell you, our brother Xiong cou—”

“Pow!!”

The five hadn't even finished laughing when the one who was laughing the hardest suddenly flew head over heels through the air. He landed unceremoniously on the ground a few meters away.

The battle was an extremely uneventful one.

Under the stunned eyes of everyone there, the five bullies were blown away before they could even see Bai Yunfei move. In less than ten seconds, the hoodlums were groaning on the ground with their hands on their stomachs, legs, or even throats depending on where they were hit.

“Don't mind these guys, Xinyun. Let's keep going. Which way did you say the inn was?” Bai Yunfei turned back to Tang Xinyun with a smile.

A bigger smile appeared back on her face at that, but the original wide smile on her face was gone. “Yes, it's just down this middle road; let's go...”

.....

The two crossed some streets, leaving the five hoodlums on the ground and a group of stunned onlookers.

“Eh? Isn't that...?”

On the other side of the street, the surprised voice of a twenty-something-year-old male made its way into the air. The spectacle just now had caught his attention, but the sight of something familiar made him curious.

This young man was the one who had once talked with Bai Yunfei back in Gaoyi City. He was the eldest of the house of Zhao; the outstanding disciple of the Water School—Zhao Xiluo!

“Senior Zhao, what's wrong?”

The one who spoke was a young woman in blue right next to him. Her ovalish face was lighter in pigment, her hair like a cape over her neck, and the bangs on the other side covered her glossy forehead. This was the very image of a gentle and quiet woman; one that would love nothing more than to read book after book in the comfort of her wealthy home.

“Ah, it’s nothing. Let’s go eat something, junior Kou...” Zhao Xiluo looked away. “His strength wasn’t this weak, probably got the wrong person...”

Chapter 299: Mt. Orchid

Orchid Town was as ordinary as any other town could be. The only reason why the town had any semblance of a name around Mo City was thanks to the mountain next to them. The entire mountain was special in that it had butterfly orchids growing all over it. Among the females in the area, these butterfly orchids were a local specialty that they loved to have. Since so many people would come here when they were free for the flowers, the town was renamed to better fit the mountain.

The butterfly orchids weren't a rare or expensive variety of orchids. Only the shape of their petals were something to talk about since they were shaped exactly like the wings of a butterfly. The orchids would sway gently when a breeze came, like the way a butterfly's wings flutter in the wind. A dozen were already pleasing to the eye, but an entire mountainside was a veritable paradise.

Mt. Orchid was extremely vast as well. During the busiest of seasons, the amount of tourists that came sightseeing would number in the several hundreds, but the mountain was always large enough to accommodate everyone. All over the mountain, groups of people could be seen here or there admiring the flowers. Of course, the majority of said tourists were always couples.

The coming of morning comes with the gradual rising of the sun. With the light that the sun brought, the orchids, glistening with morning dew, shined as they started evaporating in the heat. There were a few droplets left remaining on some orchids. They were reluctant to fall to the ground or be evaporated by the sun. Whether the case of the former or latter, they all seemed reluctant to part with the butterfly orchids they had bonded with during the night.

On the road up the mountain, a pair of travelers trekked slowly to the top. The two didn't walk fast, but they kept a constant pace

from start to finish, meaning they weren't suffering from traveler's fatigue even though they were well past the halfway point up the mountain.

The pair of travelers were, of course, Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun.

Naturally, Xiao Bai was flying right above them.

According to today's agenda, Bai Yunfei would accompany Tang Xinyun to Mt. Orchid and pick a few butterfly orchids for her to take home to her mother. A trivial matter like this didn't require a flying sword, so the two decided to take it slow and walk, fully enjoying the sights.

Based on what Tang Xinyun had said, the topmost part of the mountain had a small patch where plenty of butterfly-blue princesses, what the locals called them, grew. Such a name was given to this variant of butterfly orchids since they were not just violet in color; they were a stunning mix of blue and violet. Vibrant in color, vast in shape, and long-lasting, these butterfly-blue princesses could last for half a month in a vase without losing a speck of beauty.

They grew on the precipice of the mountain at the very top of a sheer cliff wall that was very hard to climb. Thus, only a few commoners would take the effort to get some, but it was no trouble at all for soul cultivators.

"Xinyun, you think I should buy a gift for auntie?" On the way, Bai Yunfei suddenly thought of a question to ask Tang Xinyun.

"Ehhh?" Having been unable to think of an answer to his question, Tang Xinyun reddened in the face. Rather than meet Bai Yunfei's eyes, she looked away, "That... you don't need to..." she softly replied.

Clueless, Bai Yunfei scratched his head. "Don't need to what? Why do I feel like I should bring a gift or something?"

“You really don’t.” Tang Xinyun shook her head again, “Mom doesn’t like those sort of things...”

“Oh, alright then...” He nodded before suddenly asking a second question, “Actually, how many people are in your family? If we’re going to your home, are we going to have to meet your uncle, grandpa, seventh aunt, or eighth aunt too?”

To Bai Yunfei, filial piety was an extremely important matter, so it only seemed natural to pay your respects to everyone in the family after returning home after a very long time.

Tang Xinyun had interpreted his words a different way and blushed an even deeper shade of red as a result. A tinge of concern crawled across her face a little while later, causing her to sigh. “Don’t worry, there are too many people in my family you won’t have to see. You probably won’t even be able to see them anyways...”

Bai Yunfei realized he had stumbled on yet another taboo topic. Tang Xinyun’s return home was without a doubt not something anyone would care about. Remorse flooded his mind as soon as he came to that realization, but before he could say something in apology, another thought struck him.

“Crap!!”

This sudden break of silence caused Tang Xinyun to jolt out of her slight depression. “Yunfei, what’s wrong? Did something happen?”

“I... I just remembered something.” Bai Yunfei ‘panicked,’ “Is aunty Zhao home too, Xinyun?”

“She is.” Tang Xinyun confirmed with a nod, “She went back home as soon as she brought me to the Crafting School, why?”

Vexed as he listened to Tang Xinyun, Bai Yunfei replied, “I remember that... aunty Zhao warned me not to get close to you. Not only are we both in the Crafting School, I’m also going home

with you—you think she’s going to assume I’ve some sort of dark plan and try to push me out of the household?”

“Uhm...” Tang Xinyun blinked several times in rapid succession while studying Bai Yunfei’s ‘miserable’ expression.

Before long, a slight chuckle escaped her lips, “Hehe... knowing aunty Zhao, she’d do something like that if she doubted you...”

“Ahhh!?”

What Bai Yunfei said before was only a joke to try and cheer Tang Xinyun up, but her answer was actually quite worrying to the ears. Thinking back to the embarrassing first encounter he had with her and Zhao Mancha, Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but grimace with how the older woman kept glaring at him.

“It’s a good thing I saved her life before. She shouldn’t treat me that way... hopefully...” Bai Yunfei tried to console himself.

.....

The two continued up the mountain after that. Rather than talking about Tang Xinyun’s familial matters, Bai Yunfei chose to move to an even lighter topic.

At some point during their conversation, the two arrived near their destination. The top of the mountain was about fifty meters tall and almost ten meters wide. According to what Tang Xinyun had said, the precipice nearby was almost impossible for commoners to scale, but the butterfly orchids there were of the best variety. The ones that grew there were tenacious, and with the amount of orchids growing there, the precipice looked as if a group of butterflies were resting.

Looking up at the precipice, Bai Yunfei estimated the distance a bit before smiling at Tang Xinyun, “Let’s go then.”

“Yes.” She nodded.

With a push against the ground, both of them flew toward the

precipice. Stepping off a protruding piece of rock on the wall, the two started to make their way up the precipice without much trouble.

After several repetitions, the two finally neared the top just in time to hear someone let out a small peal of laughter.

“Ah, there’s someone here?”

Bai Yunfei’s surprise was only momentary when he got to the precipice. Worried that he might be intruding on someone else’s private moment, he was about to turn away when what he saw in front of him caused his face to sour.

Just ten meters ahead of him was a massive clearing of butterfly-blue princesses swaying gently in the wind. The butterfly-blue princesses were absolutely breathtaking, like a superior entity that overlooked the butterfly orchids on the mountainside below.

However, a male and female stood in the middle of them all. The graceful-looking woman wore a violet robe with both hands on her skirt as she laughed merrily while trampling over the butterfly-blue princesses!!

Right behind her, the male stood with his arms crossed against his chest. He was smiling as he watched the female dance about, but a small lecherous tint could be seen in his eyes.

There weren’t many butterfly-blue princesses here to begin with. If the female were to continue trampling over them, there’d be none left. The sight of so many butterfly-blue princesses being scattered into the wind was a saddening one.

Bai Yunfei’s sudden appearance had startled the two. The female had even screamed when she saw him before leaping behind the male like a cat. The smile on the male’s face had been wiped clean. He adopted a battle-ready stance with his fists clenched as a chilling aura came out of him.

He was a soul cultivator!

A following flash of light later, Tang Xinyun came flying up right next to Bai Yunfei.

Before Bai Yunfei could even say anything, the man in front of him took a single step back, “Tang Xinyun!!”

“Eh?” Bai Yunfei had been so surprised by what the other man said that he completely forgot about what the female had been doing just a moment ago. Turning to the equally surprised Tang Xinyun, Bai Yunfei asked, “Do you know him, Xinyun?”

Blinking away her surprise, Tang Xinyun focused on the other male for a moment. “He’s...” She hesitated, “he’s my older cousin from mother’s side of the family, I think...”

“Older cousin! That is a family member of auntie?” Bai Yunfei exclaimed. He hadn’t thought that they’d come across Tang Xinyun’s family member here of all places.

Tang Xinyun shook her head, “Not quite. He’s not related to mother, he’s... the nephew of my father’s third wife.”

The third wife of Tang Xinyun’s father. The one that coerced him to completely forgo Tang Xinyun’s mother and the one who had bullied the two for years.

“Hah! Of course there’s no relationship between your mother and I!” A jeering taunt was heard from the male. “I, Hua Binbai, am the heir to the house of Hua; we are in no way related to the house of Chu, and you are thus, not my ‘younger cousin.’ I’d be embarrassed otherwise!”

A cold chill descended over Bai Yunfei’s face. “What did you say?”

Inquisitively, Hua Binbai stared at Bai Yunfei. After ascertaining his strength, Hua Binbai snorted. “Who are you? You may have some strength as a late-stage Soul Warrior, but not enough to stand on the same level as I, scram!!”

Then completely disregarding Bai Yunfei, he turned his attention

to Tang Xinyun. “After abandoning your home for nearly a full year, I had thought you died a dog’s death! That servant Zhao Mancha said you became a disciple of some elder in the Crafting School. What a joke!! Only that woman Chu Qingxue believed her... but now that I think about it, you’re only a late-stage Soul Warrior... how embarrassing! You should’ve stayed away and pretended to be a disciple in the crafting school. How dare you come back home and embarrass all of us!”

“Hua Binbai, you—!!” Caught completely off guard by his harsh words, Tang Xinyun started to violently tremble.

“I what? Did I say something wrong!?” Somehow, he was getting carried away with his emotions. “The heiress to the Tang is now my sister-in-law. She should’ve drove you and your mother out from the Tang a lot earlier. Why don’t you listen to what uncle said and leave home another year before coming back with some weak guy?”

“You... you...!” At a loss for words, Tang Xinyun didn’t know what to say or even think. Each word spoken to her was meant to embarrass and humiliate. She hadn’t a high opinion of him before she left a year ago, but his attitude was getting to unbelievable heights. All that was left for her to do was tremble and shake in anger as she tried to figure out what to say.

A hand tightened around her wrist and pulled her back half a step. As soon as she stepped back, the figure of someone stepped in front of her to hide the poisonous face of Hua Binbai from her.

“Xinyun, you said that he’s not... related to you, right?” Bai Yunfei whispered, only to receive a slightly confused nod of confirmation in return.

“That’s good then.” Bai Yunfei closed his eyes briefly before turning to look back at the incredulous Hua Binbai with a smile.

“Then if I tear that dirty mouth off his face and bash his teeth in, there won’t be any problems, right?”

Chapter 300: Knocking Out A Mouthful of Teeth

“Uh...” The words that came out of Bai Yunfei’s mouth had been so shocking that even the girl hiding behind Hua Binbai peeked her head around to stare incredulously at Bai Yunfei.

“You brat!! What... what did you say!?” An angry finger was pointed at Bai Yunfei. Hua Binbai could hardly believe his ears at what he was hearing.

“I’m pretty sure I made myself clear. Maybe it’s a little hard for you to understand with that IQ of yours, but don’t worry, you’ll understand as soon as I’m done with you.”

“Pft...” Unable to stop herself in time, a slight giggle made its way out of Tang Xinyun as the weight behind Bai Yunfei’s words sunk in. The smile she gave him revealed no traces of the previous anger she had displayed on her face. She knew that Bai Yunfei’s present and future actions would be slightly inappropriate, but she was still looking forward to them.

“Yunfei, make sure you go easy on him so he doesn’t die...” Rather than stop him, Tang Xinyun made sure to give him a warning.

Bai Yunfei shot her a glance and shrugged, “Fine, I’ll listen to you...”

The glance had a meaning as if to say, “You’re really too kind. You’re afraid that I’m going to beat him to death.”

“.....”

The fact that the two people in front of Hua Binbai were casually discussing how to ‘punish’ him made him furious beyond furious. His anger was such that the smile on his face immediately turned upside down as he pointed a finger at them. “Haha, fine! I get it! This is the guy you brought back? A whimpy Soul Warrior, and yet

so arrogant! Don't blame me for not holding back! If my hand 'slips' and hurts him, don't blame me!!”

Before Hua Binbai finished speaking, his hand flipped over to reveal a large amount of soulforce gathering in his palm. Straight away, a chilly aura began to materialize before a three-inch rhombus-shaped blade appeared.

He clearly had practiced doing something like this before. The violet-robed woman hiding behind him revealed a face that was completely red as she beheld his weapon in full glory.

Hua Binbai chuckled at the reaction of the woman behind him. Turning away, his eyes immediately grew cold as he glared at Bai Yunfei. With a single swipe of his hand, the icy blade shot toward Bai Yunfei's chest.

“Bang!!”

The pleased look in Hua Binbai's eyes had quickly turned to disbelief when the hand of Bai Yunfei smashed the icy blade into dozens of fragments that quickly evaporated away.

“An ice type soul cultivator... those are rare, but I hate them nonetheless.” Bai Yunfei spoke with a dark smile before he disappeared from sight.

Sensing that he was about to be attacked from the front, Hua Binbai brought his right hand up to protect himself. As he did, an incredible grip pulled his wrist down.

A powerful attack suddenly struck him in the chest, causing him to double over, and his face turned red due to the pain.

Bai Yunfei had slammed his knee into Hua Binbai's stomach.

An early-stage Soul Sprite like Hua Binbai had a reasonable amount of physical strength, so it came as a surprise to see vomit nearly come out of his mouth.

Doubling over in pain, Hua Binbai didn't even have the time to

fully scrunch together before the collar of his clothes was pulled up by Bai Yunfei. He was forced back onto his feet.

Surprised by the sudden force, Hua Binbai tried his best to materialize as much elemental ice around him as he could. Before a substantial defense or attack could be formed, there was another thumping sound when Bai Yunfei slammed a Threefold Punch into his stomach again.

“Bleegh!!” This time, a driblet of vomit really did come out. Thanks to the pain, the elemental ice he was trying to control was immediately dispelled.

“Impossible!! How... how is he so strong!?” A mental howl was running through Hua Binbai’s mind as he struggled to think of how a ‘weak’ Soul Warrior was able to corner him in just two short moves.

“Yo—”

“Pow!!”

Not even one word of what Hua Binbai was about to say escaped his mouth before Bai Yunfei’s left hand let go of his collar and slapped him square on the left side of his face.

“I—”

“Pow!!”

Caring not for what Hua Binbai was trying to say, Bai Yunfei slapped him again on the other side of the face.

“Pow! Pow! Pow! Pow...”

The series of sounds that came from the precipice had been loud enough to alert the other people nearby.

“Young master!!”

The oddity of the sounds had made their way down to where a group of soldiers were standing guard. Upon hearing the strange noises, one of the guards looked up. Shocked by what he was

hearing, his cries alerted the other soldiers before they all came rushing over.

Since they were guarding the precipice from the other side, they hadn't been able to see Bai Yunfei or Tang Xinyun.

They weren't soldiers of common strength. The weakest of the group was a Soul Personage, and the captain was a late-stage Soul Warrior. With their strength, they were able to ascend to the precipice with little difficulty.

“Chirp!!”

A loud chirp echoed through Mt. Orchid, and a strong gale of wind blew through the area right afterwards. The wind circled around the stony area where the soldiers stood, and one after another, each one of them fell to the ground.

“Soul... soulbeast!!”

The captain cried out in fright when he saw a quickshade bird flying around them after knocking them to the ground.

Up on the precipice, Bai Yunfei slapped Hua Binbai's face another ten times before finally stopping. Hua Binbai's face was already unrecognizable; his mouth wasn't torn apart like what Bai Yunfei had said he would do, but it wasn't all that far off either.

Eyeing the frightened soldiers on ground, and then the terrorized Hua Binbai in front of him, Bai Yunfei said, “Take this as a small lesson. If you don't know how to talk like a civilized person, go home and ask your parents. If there's a repeat, I won't knock out a few of your teeth, I'll pull out your entire tongue!!”

“Pow!!”

With that, Bai Yunfei slammed his right fist into Hua Binbai's face one last time. Letting go as he punched him, Bai Yunfei watched as Hua Binbai flew off the precipice and down onto the soldiers nearby. A trail of blood followed the human bullet along with several fragments of teeth.

It was a finely controlled punch that wouldn't leave any lasting injuries on Hua Binbai other than knocking out his teeth.

Promises were meant to be kept when said. If Bai Yunfei said he'd knock out someones's teeth, then he'd make sure not a single tooth was left behind.

Turning his attention to Hua Binbai's frightened female companion, Bai Yunfei instructed the quickshade bird up in the air, "Xiao Bai, escort her down."

With a chirp, the bird flapped its wings, enveloping the woman in a bubble of green light. With another chirp, the bubble was flown down to the group of soldiers.

.....

From there, Bai Yunfei watched as the group of soldiers fled the area with Hua Binbai in tow. Smiling as he turned back to Tang Xinyun, he asked, "Was that punishment a little too light?"

"Haha... it's enough." She shook her head dismissively, "Thanks, Yunfei..."

"Don't thank me, I just felt that he was an eyesore. With the amount of crap coming from his mouth, a beating was to be expected." He dismissed her thanks with a wave of his hand. In truth, the sound of Hua Binbai being slapped in again and again was a soothing to his ears.

Gratitude flashed across Tang Xinyun's eyes for a brief moment before concern replaced it. "But... there's a problem. He's next in line to the house of Hua. He might not be a problem now, but he's still the son of the current head and the nephew of that woman. The Hua will definitely come to Mo City for the Reunion City, so I'm afraid tha—"

"—that they might look for revenge?" Bai Yunfei interrupted with a grin, "Don't worry. It'll probably end up being a small conflict between us of the younger generation. If he does hire

someone to help, I'll teach them a lesson too, and if someone stronger from the previous generation tries to pressure me, I'll be sure to toss out the names of our seniors and master to scare them."

The pride behind Bai Yunfei's words couldn't help but make Tang Xinyun smile a bit. "Haha, that works. You're a junior to the current headmaster and a disciple to the ex-headmaster, they definitely wouldn't dare do anything if they knew that."

"Ahh? So master's name can be that useful? That's great... hehe." Bai Yunfei heaved a sigh of 'relief.' "Then we don't need to worry. As long as another ignorant person comes looking for a beating, I'll be more than happy to drive them away!!"

His words were spoken casually, but the thoughts in his mind were anything but. "As long as I'm here, I won't let anyone do you wrong!"

If someone irrelevant to her family was willing to rebuke Tang Xinyun with such scathing words, Bai Yunfei could hardly imagine what kind of life Tang Xinyun's mother was living on a day-to-day basis...

"Well, that's enough of that. Let's get you some of those butterfly-blue princesses and head on out to Mo City."

"Okay..."

.....

Here in the Forest Pass Province, the city of Mo had many redeeming factors. It had a population of well over ten million, it was a city with flourishing economy, and it was also the place where one of the Five Clans lived.

On the southeastern side of the city stood a grand residence with a pair of giant stone lions standing guard by an even larger gate. This gate stood about ten meters tall and had at least ten burly-looking men standing guard on both sides of the door.

On the public-accessible side to the gates was a major road in the city that saw to the commute of many, many people every day, and each time they walked past the gates, every traveler would reveal a look of worship.

Off in the distance on this road, a male and a female could be seen slowly making their way over before stopping in front of the gates.

“So this is where the Tang lives...” Bai Yunfei looked over the expansive walls to the residence before eyeing the grandiose buildings beyond the open gate. “Xinyun, your place is huge!! It might be bigger than even the main temple of our school...”

Tang Xinyun, on the other hand, was nonplussed. “What point is there in it being huge? In my mind, the only place I can call ‘home’ is the small courtyard mother lives in. Anywhere else might as well be as cold as stone...”

Knowing again that she was thinking about something sad, Bai Yunfei swiftly moved to change the topic, “Haha, okay, let’s go see your mother. That’ll cheer you up. Let’s go, then.”

The thought of seeing her mother seemed to have cheered her up a bit, “Yes, let's.”

“Halt! State your name and purpose!”

Bai Yunfei had Tang Xinyun lead the way, but when they walked toward the gates, one of the guards suddenly block their way.

“Wha—?” Flabbergasted, Bai Yunfei looked oddly at Tang Xinyun, “They... they don’t know who you are?”

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